

# Homosexuality

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Preacher: Dr David Milnes

[ 0 : 00 ] First, I must thank you very much for inviting me. And I do praise God for Christian friends and how very precious they are and how very much we get from them.

Then, I must thank you for letting me join in your worship. In our Quechua-speaking churches in Peru, there are hundreds of them, we have no accompaniment.

But we don't sing as beautifully as you do here. And I really have appreciated taking part in unadulterated praise to God.

So, thank you on both accounts. Now, my paper's not going to come up to the great erudition of previous speakers, but I do hope it will form a sort of jumping-off place for us to discuss this very difficult subject.

which really is of importance to us in these days. And may God help us all together.

[ 1 : 07 ] And when there will be questions afterwards, I hope you will be able to answer them and not depend on me. And together, I hope that we may be able to gain just some new insights into this whole subject.

So now, my paper. No one in his right mind would opt for the life of a homosexual deviant. To be the object of ridicule and contempt, denied the fulfilments of ordinary family life, cut off from the mainstream of human interest.

Many confirmed homosexuals deplore their fate. With these words, Dr. D.J. West, in the first edition of his book, *Homosexuality*, begins his chapter on treatment.

But if this is so, why are there so many thousands of homosexuals in our country today? And is it true that many of them are committed Christians? What is this slavery which holds men captive to a way of life they detest and abhor?

First of all, we must ask whether homosexuality is inborn in some people. F.J. Kalman, in his work among homosexuals in New York, considered that he had found evidence to support this view.

[ 2 : 29 ] He secured the names of some 85 homosexually inclined twins, of whom 40 were identical twins. Of these 40, he succeeded in tracing the brothers of 37, and found that all were homosexually inclined.

In contrast, the brothers of the non-identical twins showed no particular homosexual tendencies.

D.J. West, commenting on Kalman's findings, says, one explanation of Kalman's figures is that they are due to temperamental similarity rather than any...

Sorry. Kalman's figures is that they are due to temperamental similarity rather than to any environmental... of any environmental influence.

So most people don't accept Kalman's findings of inborn homosexuality. But West goes on to point out that Kalman drew his cases from criminal and abnormal people.

In the earlier edition of his book, West quotes Parker's investigations of twins, where he came across a man who was happily married and with children, and whose twin brother was a practicing homosexual.

[ 3 : 47 ] Both twins were intelligent and free from neurotic symptoms and of normal masculine fatigue. The only striking difference between them lay in the way in which they had been brought up.

Their mother had wanted a girl. And when the boys were born, she fastened upon one of the babies, put a bracelet on his wrist, treated him from the start in a subtly different fashion because, as she put it, he was pretty enough to be a girl.

Both brothers and the mother herself were aware of this special relationship. The affected twin became a sensitive, home-loving boy, closely attached to his mother, whereas the heterosexual brother preferred football to sex.

This would point to the importance of environment and upbringing rather than heredity. The importance of upbringing is also brought out in the study of intersexuals, that is, those who are not fully differentiated and may be born with a mixture of male and female glands.

In some cases, there may be a testis on one side of the body and an ovary on the other. Studies of these intersexuals afford additional evidence that the direction of the sexual inclination does not depend upon physical constitution.

[ 5 : 05 ] An intersexual's desires are more likely to fall into line with the sex in which he is reared rather than to conform to the sex which his endocrine glands belong.

This is evidence in favor of the view that sexual orientation is acquired by psychological conditioning and against the view that it is preordained by endocrine and glandular factors.

What, then, are the aspects of a child's upbringing which might influence his sexual orientation?

Pre-pubertal children will naturally segregate themselves according to their sex.

Tom Bowers of Edinburgh says that this happens even at the toddler stage before cultural factors could come into play. Some of you may have seen the television series that he did quite recently. And other things being equal it would seem to be usual at the primary school stage. Early friendships will normally be with those of the same sex.

[ 6 : 09 ] The adolescent's youth's attitude towards the opposite sex is influenced by that of the parents towards each other and by the ideas of his peers.

So, we can try to give our children a good example in our married lives and help them in choosing their friends. And this question of our children this is the thing which must concern us most.

I had my great friend at hospital who was a missionary in Africa did tremendous work both as a surgeon there and in language translation.

and took his family to Canada where they had the wide open spaces skiing canoeing and everything else. And one of his boys was a doctor came to his father a few years ago and said Dad, I'm a homosexual.

And I cannot for the life only see why this should be in whatever we say about the parents' influence. So, we are concerned and we try to give our children a good example in our married lives and we try to help them in choosing their friends.

[ 7 : 20 ] There are certain attitudes in parents which can distort a child's sexual development. Many homosexual men describe an intense emotional bond with their mother which apparently contributed towards a failure in them to relate to the opposite sex as adults.

The mother may have taught the son to seek only her company to treat her as a girlfriend and to lavish on her his attention. It may be that she does this with just one of her sons to provide herself with company in her old age.

Often, the son will model himself on his mother adopting her mannerisms and preferences and he will be unable to relate to other women even if it so happens that the mother dies and leaves him bereft of her companionship.

If it be asked why a man who has so much experience in playing the gallant suitor to his mother is unable to do so to other adult women, the psychoanalyst would say that because of taboos against incest, his relationship with his mother has never been allowed to mature beyond a certain point and this disability persists.

Likewise, some girls who have formed a too intimate bond with their father find it impossible to relate sexually to other adult men. This is the Oedipus situation and is the basis for the Freudian theory of homosexuality.

[ 8 : 52 ] In Greek mythology, Oedipus was a foundling who returned as an adult to his native land and unknowingly killed his father and married his own mother. When he found out what he'd done, he gouged out his own eyes in remorse.

The theory of the Oedipal conflict was first propounded by Sigmund Freud from a study of the free associations of his neurotic patients. Time and again, the Oedipus theme would emerge.

Freud did not invent the story. Patient after patient related it to him in some form or other and many psychiatrists since Freud have had the same experience.

However, this theory would seem inadequate to explain the origin of homosexuality in most cases if only because the majority of homosexuals are not neurotic.

Even so, the theme of a bond between a possessive mother and her son occurs often enough to give us cause for reflection.

[ 9 : 58 ] all this would seem to point to the fact that a child's sexual development is greatly influenced by the parent's attitude towards sex. Our abilities to cope with this side of married life may vary, but we should do all we can to play our part as man and wife, each being subject to the other out of reverence for Christ.

The development of a child's sexuality is like the unfolding of a delicate flower. It must be nurtured in the right environment, encouraged and directed with compassion and protected from corrupting influences which would divert it into forms which produce only misery, guilt and despair. Another factor in the development of homosexuality which must be mentioned is the deliberate choice of this way of life by the individual. In our concern for the homosexual we must be careful to treat him as a responsible individual and we cannot pretend that he is wholly at the mercy of his past.

In going through the literature I came upon a verse by A.E. Hausman who was a well-known homosexual at the turn of the century. From all accounts he was a sensitive, introverted type and doubtless his upbringing had paid a part in his sexual orientation.

But the poem I refer to illustrates another side of the coin. his deliberate rejection of the Christian moral laws. And the verse he wrote was, The laws of God, the laws of man, he may keep the will and can, not I.

[ 11 : 42 ] Let God and man decree laws for themselves, but not for me. And if my ways are not as theirs, let them mind their own affairs. Their deeds I judge and much condemn, yet when did I make laws for them?

So we see that for many, homosexuality will have been a deliberate choice. And this is always an important consideration in our dealing with the homosexual.

So far I have touched on four aspects of homosexuality, that it is probably not inborn, that it is partly due to upbringing and environment, that it is influenced by the attitude of the parents towards sex, and that there is an element of choice on the part of each individual.

However, the current medical concept of homosexuality would seem to be that it is just an alternative option to heterosexuality. A recent article in the British Medical Journal says homosexuality is slowly becoming recognized and accepted as part of human sexuality.

Later, the writers say, men undergo conditioning processes too, and it may be quite late in adulthood before they recognize or acknowledge their homosexuality.

[ 13 : 12 ] And finally, quote, in our opinion, those homosexual men and women who come to terms with their sexuality face no more problems than heterosexuals.

That is, those homosexual men and women who come to terms with their sexuality face no more problems than heterosexuals. End of quote.

Some psychiatrists would even say that it is both irresponsible and immoral to try and reorientate a homosexual. Dr. Stanley Jones writes, attempted treatment or alteration of the basic personality of an inborn homosexual can only be described as a moral outrage.

End of quote. These comments would appear to assume that homosexuality is inborn and should be accepted as such. This may be one modern medical concept of homosexuality and it would certainly seem to be a convenient solution to a very difficult problem.

However, I would point out that there are many psychiatrists who do not accept this view. D.J. West doubts that any man has been completely homosexual all his life and Kinsey observed that homosexual men tend to drift towards heterosexuality as they grow older.

[ 14 : 35 ] And since the only real way of knowing whether a man is homosexual is subjective, this would be evidence against the idea of an inborn fixed homosexual constitution.

Now we must ask if there is a certain type of personality which predisposes a man to become homosexual. This is a subject which has aroused much interest and many tests have been devised with a view to arriving at an answer.

Early investigators thought that they had a positive answer, but it was found that they were describing neurotic symptoms in homosexuals who had sought psychiatric help.

It is important in our investigations not to confine ourselves to a specialised group such as psychiatric patients or inmates of prisons or borroughs.

if we are to get an unbiased answer. And when a more representative sample of the population were investigated, the one striking finding that emerged was how many homosexuals appear to be well-adjusted personalities, not at all neurotic, and no typical homosexual personality type was

found.

[ 15 : 53 ] Still we wonder whether some men are born with a type of personality which makes them take refuge in homosexuality. Here again we are up against the problem of what we are born with and what our early training and conditioning will do to us.

And there is no easy answer. It would appear reasonable to concentrate on what can be changed by way of prevention and not to fall back on what cannot be changed that is inborn characteristic. The evidence for the importance of environment and upbringing has already been emphasised. As far as treatment of confirmed homosexuals is concerned, it would seem that these days only the psychoanalysts even try.

Dr. Desmond Curran states that chances of cure in confirmed cases are negligible and that psychiatrists should concentrate on making the patient a better adjusted homosexual and not aspire to convert him to heterosexuality.

E.J. West observes that while the psychoanalysts appear to regard homosexuality as theoretically amenable to treatment, some of them recognise a class of incurables whom they classify as constitutional and nearly all admit that many cases are exceedingly tough nuts to crack.

[ 17 : 13 ] So far we have sought to assess the literature with respect to homosexuals in general. We now turn to the problem of homosexuals and Christians. There are, it seems, a considerable number of Christians of all age groups who are committed to doing the will of God and who are homosexually orientated.

This brings us to the question of the Bible's view of homosexuality. To my mind, the judgment on Sodom and Gomorrah in Genesis 19 and the fact that in Leviticus 20 the homosexual acts as a capital offense indicate the biblical attitude in the Old Testament and in the New Testament, Paul in the first chapter of Romans speaks of men who have changed God's design for creation for something else.

God has made himself known to mankind and it is man's duty to honour God and his laws. Yet man has not done this and Paul selects a typical example of the subtle way man convinces himself that what his own heart desires is of more consequence than God's way.

And the example he chooses is homosexual. And as far as practising homosexuals and our relationship to them is concerned, Paul in writing to the Corinthians says, I wrote to you not to associate with anyone who bears the name of brother if he is guilty of immorality, not even to eat with such an one.

And a few verses later, do not be deceived, neither the immoral nor homosexual will inherit the kingdom of God. And it would seem that Paul expected those who were rescued from the Corinthian cesspit to change.

[ 19 : 02 ] He says, such were some of you that you were washed, you were sanctified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the spirit of our God.

And here we distinguish between people who are homosexually orientated and cannot help it, and people who are practising homosexuals and must, what I'm saying, the apostle will be treated in a different way.

If our discussion were purely theoretical, it might seem there was little more to say on the subject. And indeed, it is important that we do start with a firm baseline, especially in a society whose standards are continually deteriorating.

But if we ask what is the experience of those who have to deal with Christians who are homosexually orientated, we find the problem is a complicated one.

First, there is the question of our own prejudice. We desire to help the homosexually orientated who has become a Christian to experience the redemptive power of the Holy Spirit in his life, so that he may change.

[ 20 : 19 ] Therefore, we must approach him with warmth and compassion, or we shall never succeed in convincing him of the love of Christ for him.

He may well be a desperately lonely man, unable even to discuss his problem with others or to understand his own reactions. How then are we to rid ourselves of our own prejudices, aware as we are of our own feelings and of the awful results of this contagion in others?

And for some of us, there will be a need to work through and to acknowledge our own sins as we seek to identify with others.

Then we must believe that health is possible. This does not mean that we have a formula and words based on scripture which acts like a fair is one and immediately changes everything. Consider the opinion of Dr. Ernest White, a Christian psychiatrist with many years of experience in Harley Street. Now this is Dr. Ernest White and not Dr. John White.

[ 21 : 32 ] I quote later John White whom you probably know who lives in Canada now. Dr. Ernest White was a Christian of many years experience in Harley Street. He says, Christian conversion does not provide the solution to sexual inversion.

There is no cure for the invert over 35 years of age. Pray for them and help them to accept it. The opinion of a Christian who grappled with a problem homosexuality for many years in London. Another Christian psychiatrist, Dr. Roger Moss of Exeter, writes, even a brief experience of Christian pastoral care shows that a personal encounter with Jesus Christ leads to the start of a new way of life rather than the instant cure of all ills.

This is not to say that God is not equal to the problem of homosexuality, but that in personality issues of this sort, the individual usually takes a long time to absorb this new factor into the depth of his being.

We have to reckon with the existence of many homosexuals who are convinced Christians and who have prayed without success to be delivered from their difficulties.

[ 22 : 58 ] We should betray a lack of compassion and understanding to suggest that such people have not had sufficient faith. End of quote.

So how are we to deal with the presence of homosexuals in our church fellowship? Now I confess to a lack of practical experience here.

we hardly have this problem in the indigenous churches in proof. However, Christian counselors involved with the problem have outlined various steps.

First of all, the homosexual will need to accept and be convinced of the abnormality of his condition. This is important in view of the modern tendency to solve the problem by denying its existence. homosexuality is not an acceptable alternative for the Christian. Then, second, he needs to deal with his feelings of guilt.

[ 23 : 59 ] Commenting on homosexuals in general, D.J. West says that one of their chief characteristics is a pronounced sense of guilt and shame. He says some homosexuals accept all too readily the popular sentiment of condemnation and go through life in an agony of self-torture over their immoral desires.

And if this is so for those who are not Christians, how much more for those who are aware of the Bible's condemnation of their orientation. Some Christian counselors deal with this question of guilt by stating that homosexuality is either inborn or due to early upbringing and is therefore not the victim's fault.

but how do they know this? Evidence for inborn homosexuality is scanty and it's hardly right to blame all our failures on our parents.

Other counselors take the opposite view. You chose to become a homosexual, now you can choose to abandon this way of life. This may be a little simplistic, but it is true that nothing will be achieved without a will to change on the part of the person concerned.

So guilt will best be met not by denial and excuses, but by a frank acknowledgement of our sins. Guilty we are indeed, all of us.

[ 25 : 21 ] But sexual sins give rise to a greater awareness of our culpability. And this must most surely have its good side. The proud are just as guilty.

But the harlots go into the kingdom of heaven before them because they acknowledge their guilt. Let us see again what is God's good news, not only for the homosexual, but for all of us.

Of all Christians who have left us a record of their struggles for forgiveness, perhaps John Newton sank as low as any before experiencing the redeeming power of Christ.

He was not a homosexual, but he became for a time the property of a slave in West Africa, and when he had escaped from this degradation, he continued his terrible work.

Even after his conversion, he continued work as a slaver, with all sexual overtones, including the rape of captive girls. How could such a man deal with his memories in later life as he lay awake at night and wrestled with the accuser of the brethren?

[ 26 : 32 ] It is surely not by chance that Newton wrote some of the most glorious poetry in the language extolling the amazing grace of God towards sinful man.

We know that grace is unmerited, yet how often we approach God in the rags of our own righteousness. A homosexual will stand afar off and beat his breast and may go home relieved of his guilt if he can open his heart to the gospel of the free grace of God. But now we need a corrective in our prescription. We do not continue in sin that grace may abound. The homosexual must accept responsibility for his actions. He must stop engaging in homosexual acts. John White, in his book *Eros Defiled*, is very strong on this. He begins his section entitled, *What Should Christian Homosexuals Do?* By stating emphatically, Christian homosexuals should not practice homosexuality. And he goes on to say that this is possible for everyone.

[ 27 : 43 ] You can do it and you must, are his words. This implies renouncing intimate associations with other active homosexuals.

John White says, avoid places and circumstances which expose you to sexual arousal. Some counsellors I have spoken to accept the fact that homosexuals will continue to live together in the same house, but recommend that they do not share the same bedroom.

I wonder whether we should not be more drastic than this. Our Lord referred to situations such as these when he said, we must pluck out an eye if it offend us, or cut off a hand or foot if it makes us lose our faith.

This is a divine imperative, not a helpful suggestion. As Frank Worthen in the booklet, *Steps Towards Wholeness* says, bridges must be burned, the old life must be abandoned, the door shut and the option closed.

So this will mean abstinence from sexual acts, a change in the circle of his friends, and even a change of clothes. This may sound drastic, and to some counsellors it will, as Roger Moss says, remind them of those heartbreaking occasions when they set out for the drug addict the arduous route to recovery, and see that for many it is just too much.

[ 29 : 18 ] And the homosexual will say, well, does that mean for all my life I shall never know a tender loving relationship again? And they look forward to a barren wilderness of the life.

So this is a way of suffering which we must be prepared to embrace. The gospel is full of the call to suffer with and for Christ, and our forefathers knew this.

I was given a bookmark for my Bible by one such with the text, *No Cross, No Crown*, embroidered on it. This is a strange sentiment to many Christians today.

I have always been impressed by Victor Frankel's observations on suffering, and I have seen them quoted by Christian writers twice in the last few months. Frankel was in several concentration camps during the war, and he nearly succumbed like so many others.

Of his experiences, he wrote, I was struggling to find the reason for my sufferings, my slow dying. In a last violent process against the hopelessness of imminent death, I sensed my spirit piercing through the enveloping gloom.

[ 30 : 33 ] I felt it transcend that hopelessness and meaningless world, and from somewhere I heard a victorious yes in answer to my question of the existence of an ultimate purpose.

Frankel goes on, if there is meaning in life at all, then there must be meaning in suffering. Suffering is an ineradicable part of life, even as fate and death.

Without suffering and human death, life cannot be complete. The way in which a man accepts his fate and all the suffering it entails, the way in which he takes up his cross, gives him ample opportunity, even under the most difficult circumstances, to add deeper meaning to his life.

So, to these three steps, we must add a fourth, a willingness to accept help from others whom he can trust and who are committed to accompanying him in his struggle.

John White says to the homosexual, go to a trustworthy friend, perhaps a Christian counselor or a prayer partner, with whom you can be perfectly open and frank. Make a clean breast of your story, talk with him, pray with him.

[ 31 : 53 ] To quote Roger Moss again, very little useful change can occur until a homosexual is able to start trusting Christian people on the basis of their acceptance of him.

And he mentions the experience of Gerald Coates, whose story of healing and deliverance from homosexuality were carried in the July 77 issue of *Foussade* magazine, who is now sustained by a Christian community of whom he can say, the great security for me is that there are half a dozen men who know absolutely everything about me, which means I do not have to pretend anymore.

Dr. Elizabeth Moberly writes well of the need of homosexuals for healthy relationships to help them in their reorientation. She says, relationships are the normal channel for psychological growth within the purposes of God.

And as such, it is important to make the fullest possible use of them as God-given channels of healing. For the homosexual, this will involve the fulfillment of need that would ordinarily have been met through attachment to the parent of the same sex.

These needs can and should be fulfilled without sexual activity. But they will not be fulfilled unless people are willing to provide good, non-sexual relationships.

[ 33 : 30 ] The churches cannot seek healing for the homosexual at a distance without involvement. It is just a sheer contradiction. This presupposes that we have a church fellowship that can cope with such spiritual warfare.

And we pray that our churches may accept the challenge. To help us, there are Christian organizations specifically concerned with helping the homosexuals.

And one such is the True Freedom Trust based on Upton Wirral Merseyside. This provides literature and cassettes and also has a list of carefully chosen people who are available to befriend and support those who contact them for help.

And when a group is formed, the aim is to complement and encourage the Christian sharing in the group's member church, not to replace them. This organization was recommended to me by a minister in Bristol who has considerable pastoral experience in dealing with homosexuals.

Now, before I sum up, I would mention briefly two other aspects which may concern us. One is homosexuals and marriage, and the other is the homosexual and mass evangelism. We belong to an age where the quick solution and the instant cure are the order of the day, and we might be tempted to think that marriage is the quick fix for the homosexuals.

[ 35 : 03 ] All are agreed that this is not so. Part of a homosexual's problems is that he has probably not matured sufficiently to be able to enter into a proper heterosexual relationship.

To be able to do so, he must, in the fellowship of the church, be helped by ongoing non-sexual relationships. Otherwise, it is likely that both partners in the marriage will be asking what the other is unable to give, and your Christian fellowship may have a divorce on its hands, and two people who are even more baffled and distressed than when they came to you for help.

I would sincerely recommend that you seek expert advice from someone with experience in such matters. And then, many have found that mass evangelism, which is so popular today, is not appropriate for reaching homosexuals.

Our Lord preached to the crowds, but he also spoke to individuals, and the homosexual usually responds more readily to the quiet individual approach.

Mass evangelism may only confirm his feelings of rejection by the self-righteous. A personal approach by one who can assure them of his respect for them as people for whom Christ died, is more likely to meet their need.

[ 36 : 29 ] The one thing they desperately need is someone to respect them, if they don't respect themselves. And so, to recapitulate, the homosexual must accept the abnormality of his condition.

The homosexual must be helped to open his heart to the free grace of God. He must take up his cross and put to death the old nature. And he must be willing to share his burden with others.

And at this point, I realize that I'm outlining what we all need as the Church of God. We all need to recognize how far we fall short of God's plan for our lives.

We need to consider again how much of our behavior is due to output conformity, and how far we have been renewed inwardly by the Holy Spirit of God.

We all need to face the challenge to take up our cross. And we need a new sense of fellowship among ourselves, and an openness to share our problems.

[ 37 : 29 ] Now, can you help us forward in these things? Thank you very much, Dr. Milnes. I'm sure we all very much appreciate the perceptiveness of Dr. Milnes' account of the problem.

Thank you.