



What the Bible Says About Sexuality

Read the following passage and mark any mention about sexuality.

Colossians 3:5-17

5 Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. 6 On account of these the wrath of God is coming. 7 In these you too once walked, when you were living in them. 8 But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. 9 Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices 10 and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. 11 Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all, and in all. 12 Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, 13 bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. 14 And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. 15 And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. 16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. 17 And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Commentary:

Paul elaborates on the new way of thinking with specific instructions. The imperatives correlate with the indicatives: you are, now be. It means that they are to unite with the transforming divine power working within them. One is either dead in sin or dead to sin. The old nature is not renewed or reformed; it is "put to death." Believers are to eradicate any persisting marks of the old life: its values, customs, and practices. These are summarized as "idolatry," putting something else before God (e.g., sex, money, power) and wanting more and more of these things. (NIV Zondervan Study Bible)

Observations:

Circle the word 'old' - what are some of the characteristics of this previous life?

Box the word 'new' - what are some of the characteristics of this new life?

Underline the phrase 'put on' - how should our behaviour correspond to our new identity?

Double underline mentions of Christ - what does our Christian identity lead us to do instead of the old way?

Interpretations:

Paul's list in verse 5 is summed up as 'idolatry', how are the things in the list idolatrous?

The new life is said to be like that of the 'creator' - what image does this provoke in your mind?

What does a community that practises vv12-15 actually look like?

If we are truly to live by doing everything in Jesus' name - how do you assess your standard of living in the Word?

Applications:

The Bible seems to indicate radical transformation. What areas of your life do you need such conversion?

How much should a Christian 'bear' one another? What does Paul's language of the old and new say about this?

Timely Truths

In either case, the revisionist argument amounts to the same thing: the condemnations in 1 Corinthians 6:9 and 1 Timothy 1:10 are not talking about committed, consensual same-sex relationships as we know them today.

No Jew thought the Ten Commandments allowed for same-sex sexual intimacy, so no one would have been surprised to see homosexual behavior—or adultery or fornication or prostitution or incest or bestiality or any other sexual activity outside of marriage—thrown into a vice list by the Apostle Paul.

Both terms refer to men who have sex with other men, the passive and the active partners. Paul is saying what we find hard to hear but what the rest of the Bible supports and most of church history has assumed: homosexual activity is not a blessing to be celebrated and solemnized but a sin to be repented of, forsaken, and forgiven.

DeYoung, Kevin. What Does the Bible Really Teach about Homosexuality?