What do you do when the Bible is used to argue against HOMOSEXUALITY?

There are usually six (6) passages that are offered to challenge homosexuality. They are: Genesis 19:1-29; Leviticus 18:22; Leviticus 20:13; I Corinthians 6:9; 1Timothy 1:10; Romans 1:18-32. Read these passages. Know these passages. But most of all know the context of these passages.

Old Testament Gay Apologetic

The Sodom and Gomorrah story (Gen 19) is not talking about long-term, committed monogamous same-sex relationship – it is talking about gay rape, which violates the hospitality laws of the day (Ezek 16:49). The parallel passage to Sodom and Gomorrah is the story in Judges 19:22-26, which consists of heterosexual rape, again highlighting the main theme of rape in concordance with Genesis 19.

Same-sex sexual relations are one of the many issues addressed in the Holiness Code (Leviticus), which also prohibits such things as wearing clothing woven of two kinds of material, getting tattoos, planting two kinds of seed together, playing with the skin of a pig and mating different kinds of animals together. Offenders are burned by the fire, executed, stoned to death or kicked out of the community. All told, 613 laws – including the sanctions regarding same-sex sexual relations – are connected by the Holiness Code to salvation, which Jesus' redemptive blood washed over in the New Covenant, and therefore they are not to be generalized for today.

Also, same-sex relationships in the Bible, such as Jonathan and David (1-2 Samuel) and Ruth and Naomi (Ruth), are thought by a small percentage of gay Christians to be physically sexual relationships.

New Testament Gay Apologetic

Jesus was silent on the issue of homosexuality. Which begs the question: if homosexuality is so important, why did Jesus not say one word about it?

A Roman centurion asked Jesus to heal his servant (Mt 8:5-13; Lk 7:1-10). The Greek word for servant is *pais*, which can literally means "a male lover". *Pais*, sexual servants, were very common in the ancient Near East Roman culture, and Jesus would have known this. Therefore Jesus was not opposed to homosexuality. According to ancient literature, eunuchs could be manmade (castrated) or naturally born (incapable of – or disinterested in—intercourse with women). As one gay Christian author puts it, "To introduce one's self today as a eunuch in ancient times was roughly akin to introducing one's self today as a hairdresser from San Francisco."

Paul's condemnation of same-sex sexual relations in Romans 1:26-27 as "unnatural" is once again not referring to long-term, committed monogamous relationships. He is specifically talking about the common Roman practice of pederasty, in which older males "mentor," or have sex with, male children, which is legitimately denounced as unnatural and caused by a depraved mind. (*Don't stop reading with Romans 1:32. Read Romans 2:1, *"Therefore you have no excuse, whoever you are, when you judge others; for in passing judgment on another you condemn yourself, because you, the judge, are doing the very same thing.")*

Gay apologists believe that Paul coined the word *arsenokoitēs* (1 Cor 6:9-11) as he was referring to older males who were customers of male "call boys" or prostitutes. This practice was common during the Greco-Roman period. It wasn't until 1946 in the Revised Standard Version that a Bible translator decided to label the unknown *arsenokoitēs* as "homosexual offender." A similar debate persists with 1Timothy 1:10.

From: Andrew Marin's book, Love Is an Orientation. pages 74-75

HELPFUL RESOURCES ADDRESSING ISSUES ABOUT HOMOSEXUALITY

Media Resources

A Fish Out of Water. Dir. Ky Dickens. Yellow Wing Productions, 2009 DVD

Lord, Save Us From Your Followers. Dir. Dan Merchant, Virgil Films, 2009 DVD

For the Bible Tells Me So. Dir. Daniel Karslake. First Run Features, 2007. DVD.

Print Resources

Barton, Bernadette. *Pray the Gay Away: The Extraordinary Lives of Bible Belt Gays*. New York University Press, 2012.

Furnish, Victor Paul. *The Moral Teaching of Paul.* 3rd Edition, Nashville: Abingdon press, 2009.

Gomes, Peter J. *The Good Book: Reading the Bible with Mind and Heart*. New York: W. Morrow, 1996.

Helminiak, Daniel A. *What the Bible Really Says about Homosexuality*. San Francisco, CA: Alamo Square, 1994.

Hershberger, Michele. *A Christian View of Hospitality: Expecting Surprises*. Scottsdale, Pa.: Herald, 1999.

Marin, Andrew. *Love Is an Orientation: Elevating the Conversation with the Gay Community*. Downers Grove, Ill: IVP, 2009.

Robinson, V Gene. *God Believes in Love: Straight Talk About Gay Marriage.* Random House, NY, 2012

Robinson, V. Gene. *In the Eye of the Storm: Swept to the Center by God*. New York: Seabury, 2008.

Rogers, Jack. *Jesus, the Bible, and Homosexuality: Explode the Myths, Heal the Church*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2006.

Ruden, Sarah. *Paul Among the People.* New York: Image Books, 2010.

Seow, Choon-Leong, editor. *Homosexuality and Christian Community.* Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996.

Smith, Ted A. *Frequently Asked Questions about Sexuality, the Bible, and the Church*. San Francisco, Calif.: Covenant Network of Presbyterians, 2006.

What We Wish We Had Known: Breaking the Silence, Moving toward Understanding : a Resource for Individuals and Families. Mt. Kisco, N.Y.: Presbyterian Church, 2001.

Wink, Walter. *Homosexuality and the Bible*. Nyack, NY: Fellowship of Reconciliation, 1996.

Compiled by Rev. David M. Montgomery 1601 Main St., Murray, KY 42071
Presbyterian Campus Minister with M.O.T.A. 270 753-6460 revdmm@gmail.com