

Message Discussion Guide THE GOSPEL AND HOMOSEXUALITY

The Church at Brook Hills,

Dr. David Platt

June 29, 2008

Romans 1:18-32

This guide is to help you facilitate discussion with your Small Group. Use it as a resource to lead your group in discovering and owning the truths of God's Word. There may be questions you do not want to use and there may be instances where you just want to focus on a particular point or truth. Some questions may bring out emotions and cause people to dwell on their relationship with God. Your role is to facilitate this experience not to complete the discussion guide. Use this as a flexible teaching tool not a rigid teaching task list.

Connect . . .

Use one or both of the following options to introduce the discussion time to follow.

Option 1

Invite learners to share a time when they had to choose to respond to a person or situation with either a Christ-like reaction or a sinful reaction. Ask the following questions:

- Were the circumstances outside of your control?
- What influenced you when making this decision? Why?
- Did you consider your personal responsibility when making this decision?
- Would you change your decision?

Option 2

Name the following TV shows: "Sex and the City," "Friends," "Grey's Anatomy," "Will & Grace," "Seinfeld," "Swingers." Note that these are all shows that contain explicit references and devote entire story lines to sex outside of the realm of marriage between a man and a woman. Ask the following questions:

- Are any of these shows worse than the others? Why, or why not?
- How do/can these shows impact the way that we view sexual sins?
- How can they influence our convictions about sexuality?
- How do shows like these pervert the goodness of sex? How do they de-value sex?
- What is the danger in watching shows like these for entertainment?

Option 3

Today's message deals with the topic of homosexuality. Here are some questions to get your group discussing this issue:

- When you think of homosexual behavior, would you tend to think of it as better or worse than infidelity in heterosexual marriage?
- How does the media today generally portray homosexual behavior? Infidelity in marriage? Is that a Biblical representation?
- Most people today know someone who is living out an active homosexual lifestyle. What single words would you use to describe your feelings toward that person? Are those feelings acceptable from a Biblical viewpoint for a Christ-follower?

Review the Message . . .

Homosexuality and the World . . .

- **Homosexuality is innate.**
 - "I was born homosexual."
 - "God made me this way."
 - "Homosexual orientation is one of God's gifts in my life."

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- **Homosexuality is fixed.**
 - “My homosexual orientation cannot be changed.”
 - “This is just the way I am.”
- **Homosexuality is loving.**
 - “My partner and I love each other in an exclusive relationship. How can that be wrong?”
- **Homosexuality is Christian.**
 - “Jesus did not say anything against homosexuality.”
 - “I’m a Christian and I’m gay. How can that be if homosexuality is wrong?”
 - “I attend a gay church where the presence of God is evident. How can that be if homosexuality is wrong?”
- **Homosexuality is biblical.**
 - “Passages in Scripture which deal with homosexuality have been misinterpreted.”
 - “The Bible doesn’t condemn homosexuality.”

Application . . .

- Explain that homosexuality is an issue that affects many families and individuals. Observing a homosexual relationship up close gives us a unique perspective and experience. How can personally knowing a homosexual or closely observing a homosexual relationship affect how we view homosexuality?
- Does the media also affect the way that we view homosexuality? If so, how?
- Can we become desensitized to a Biblical view of homosexuality by statements such as those above from our culture and friends?
- Can our own personal views affect the way that we interpret the Word of God? Do we sometimes try to make God’s Word fit our own views? What is the danger in this?

Homosexuality and the Word . . .

- **Sin disorders our worship.**
 - **We have exchanged God’s pattern for our preferences.**
 - **Sexuality is good.**
 - **Reproduction is good.**
 - **Marriage is good.**
 - **Sex is good.**
 - **We have exchanged God’s praise for our pleasures.**
 - **We are all born with a heart of pride.**
 - **We are all bent toward sexual deviation.**

Discussion Questions

- Enlist two volunteers to read Genesis 1:24-25 and Genesis 2:24-25. (Remind learners that these passages concern relationships prior to sin entering the world.)

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Based on that knowledge, what do these passages indicate about God's design for gender/sexuality, reproduction, marriage, and sex?

- Explain that in Genesis 3 sin entered the world, giving us *ALL* a sinful heritage. Read Genesis 8:21. What does this verse illustrate about our inclination to sin? Could we conclude that we are all born with sinful hearts and prone to sexual deviation?
- Read Romans 1:18-32. Remind learners that Paul wrote this passage of Scripture in the context of pointing out the sinfulness of man in preparation for his presentation of the gospel in the chapters that followed.
- Invite a volunteer to read verses 21, 25, and 28. What is Paul's indictment in these verses?

Application . . .

- When we cease to acknowledge God alone as deserving of our obedience and worship, how does that endanger us to the temptation of sin?
- If we're not worshipping God, then who are we generally worshipping? (Ourselves and our own happiness) How can that fact cloud our future judgments?
- If Genesis gives an account of God's design for sexuality, is then *anything* outside of that design a sin?
- Why do we often ignore heterosexual sins while magnifying homosexual ones?
- Why do we tend to "rank" sexual sins, being repulsed by some and tolerant of others? What is the danger in this mindset?
- **Sin disorders our belief.**
 - **We have exchanged truth for tolerance.**
 - **We have exchanged the Word of God for the experience of man.**
 - **Homosexual advocacy must maintain that . . .**
 - **The Bible is irrelevant.**
 - **The Bible is inconsistent.**
 - **The Bible is insufficient.**

Discussion Questions

- Enlist a volunteer to read verses Romans 1:21-22, 25, and 28. What do these verses indicate about the way that one's mind is affected after failing to worship God alone?
- When people throughout history failed to worship God, they failed to believe His truth. What did they trade the truth for? What did they place their beliefs in?
- How did their altered beliefs affect their justification for behavior?

Application . . .

- How does our source of authority for our life affect our convictions and beliefs about what we think is true?
- Can our personal experiences shape our convictions and beliefs? Should they? What if they contradict the Word of God?
- Are our experiences to be used as a judge for Scripture or is Scripture to be used as a judge for our experiences?

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- Keeping in mind that we are all born with an utterly sinful nature, what is the danger in using our experiences (tainted by sin) to determine those things we should believe?
- **Sin disorders our desires.**
 - **We have exchanged sexual responsibility for supposed rights.**
 - **We have exchanged what Scripture says about our desires for what science says about our desires.**
 - **Improper sexual desire is immoral, not inevitable.**

Discussion Questions

- Invite a volunteer to read Romans 1:24, 26.
- When they failed to worship God, their beliefs were altered, leading to distorted desires. How were their desires changed? What kind of desires did they have?

Application . . .

- As we discussed earlier, God created sexuality and sex as good. Are all sexual desires bad? Are all sexual desires good?
- Just because we have a desire or were born with a certain desire, does it mean it's good or bad? How do we know whether it is good or bad?
- Remembering God's design for sex at creation, do we have responsibilities for our sexuality in spite of our natural desires?
- **Sin disorders our behavior.**
 - **We have exchanged moral obligations for natural explanations.**
 - **Causation does not imply justification.**
 - **We do not always choose our temptations, but we always choose our reactions.**

Discussion Questions

- Enlist another volunteer to read Romans 1:26-31. How was the behavior of these people changed?
- What changes in their lives impacted their behavior?
- Based on Romans 1:18-32, what was the progression of the way that sin took over their lives. (Emphasize that they failed to worship God, leading to distorted beliefs, which gave them over to distorted desires, leading to distorted behavior.)

Application . . .

- Do we always behave in ways that are congruent with our beliefs? If so, how important does that make our beliefs?
- Do we have personal responsibility for our behavior? Do influences outside of our control impact whether we maintain responsibility for our behavior or not?
- Review I Corinthians 6:9-11. What do these verses indicate about the possibilities of choosing not to follow our ungodly desires?

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Homosexuality and the Gospel . . .

- The Gospel **reorders** our worship.
- The Gospel **renews** our belief.
- The Gospel **refreshes** our desire.
- The Gospel **redeems** our behavior.

Application . . .

- How can the gospel change our behavior?
- How can the gospel bring hope to individuals who are engrossed in sinful behavior?
- How can the gospel transform our lives?

Homosexuality and the Church . . .

- Look in . . .
 - Completely **avoid** selective moral outrage.
 - Biblically **assess** your spiritual (and sexual) condition.
- Look out . . .
 - Express humble **compassion**.
 - Maintain deep **conviction**.
- Look up . . .
 - Exalt His **glory**.
 - Proclaim His **gospel**.

Application . . .

- Do I selectively judge the sins of others?
- Am I seeking to worship God and allowing His Word to impact my life on a daily basis?
- Do I distance myself from those who are struggling with sexual sins? Or who are living a homosexual lifestyle?
- Do I allow only the authority of the Word of God to determine my beliefs and convictions, without wavering?
- Do I seek to bring glory to God by spreading the gospel?

Additional Scriptures David mentioned related to a Biblical view of homosexuality:

Genesis 19; Jude vs7; Leviticus 18:22; Leviticus 20:13; I Timothy 1:9-10;