



A Monthly E-Newsletter For CenterPeace Parents Volume 5 October 2021

The Other Side of the Boat

PART 2: BUT WHAT ABOUT ...?

By Dena A Edwards

Ask most evangelical Christians what the Bible says about homosexuality, and they will direct you to six different chapters: Genesis 19, Leviticus 18 & 20, Romans 1, I Corinthians 6 and I Timothy 1. Last month, in Part 1 of our series "The Other Side of the Boat," we addressed how traditionalists view these passages as well as how non-traditionalists are able to see them differently. This month we will look at other Scriptures that also impact this conversation.

More to the Story

When I was digging into my worn Bible after my son came out, the story of Sodom in Genesis 19 was one of the first things I read. I was shocked to learn there was the parallel story in Judges 19 and 20. This city wasn't a pagan city like Sodom, it was an Israelite city called Gibeah, and the travelers weren't angels but a Levite, his concubine and his servant. Same situation: the group were begged not to stay in the town square but instead stayed at the house of an old man and the men of the town surrounded the house and begged the homeowner to send the strange man out so they could have sex with him. Interestingly, the man recounts the story in Judges 20:5 by

saying "the men surrounded the house ... they meant to kill me." In Gibeah, the old man begged the village men to take his virgin daughter and the concubine instead. Why would he offer females to the men, if their intent was to have sex with a man? In the end, the old man pushed the concubine out the door and the villagers raped her to death. Was this the act of a crowd bent on same-gender sex or the act of a crowd bent on violence?

This is Part 2 of a six-part series examining both traditional and non-traditional Biblical passages as well as cultural influences that affect how we read those passages. You can access Part 1 in the Sept 2021 CP Parents Newsletter found [HERE](#).

Separate and Apart

"Abomination" comes from the King James translation of the Hebrew word "toevah." But did you know that "toevah" is found 117 times in the Old Testament? It is used to describe eating pigs, rabbits and shellfish in Leviticus 11:4-7; to express the Egyptians' feelings about shepherds in Genesis 46:34; and to forbid loaning money and charging interest in Exodus 22:25-27, to name a few references.

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PART 2: BUT WHAT ABOUT ... ? (cont'd from page 1)

Leviticus 18 is a list of behaviors taboo to the Israelites as they resettle into Canaan. Why so many restrictions? Leviticus itself tells us. Chapter 18 starts with God telling Moses that the Israelites shouldn't do the things the Egyptians did where the Israelites used to live and shouldn't do what the Canaanites do where they are about to live. The chapter ends with verse 30 in which God says, "keep my charge to never practice any of these abominable customs" and not to "make yourselves unclean by them." The purpose of Levitical Law was to attempt to keep the the Israelites (and therefore Jesus' blood line) clean from the Gentiles, who often practiced temple prostitution and child sacrifices in their religious practices of the day.

Losing Control

Those religious practices also apply to Romans, chapter 1. Immediately before verses 26 and 27, which describe women and men "exchanging natural relations for unnatural ones," Paul explains more clearly the situation. Starting in verse 18, Paul talks about people who should know God exchanging His glory for idols, giving up God's ways for Greek ways, which included both male and female prostitution among other things.

"Bad chapters can still create great stories. Wrong paths can still lead to right places. ... Sometimes it takes losing yourself to find yourself."

- Cynthia Thurlow

Parade of Animals

How many times have you heard, "It's Adam and Eve, not Adam and Steve"? One of the biggest stances of traditionalist beliefs regarding same-gender marriage is that God created Eve to be the perfect mate for Adam. And it does take a man and a woman to procreate and fill a then-void-of-all-people earth. But let's not overlook a key verse in this dialogue: Genesis 2:19. God had finished creation and called all He created good, except for one thing: man being alone. At that time



remember, it was just man and God communing together and strolling through the still sin-free Garden of Eden. Yet God still said He alone wasn't enough. But He didn't create Eve right away – what did He do first? He paraded the "livestock, birds of the heavens and beasts of the fields" in front of Adam. What was God's intention? Many would say for Adam to name the animals, which he did at that time. But verse 20 provides more insight: "But there was not found a helper fit for him."

God was searching for a suitable companion for Adam. This wasn't about sex, or the animals wouldn't have been in the story. This was about

companionship. God didn't meet that need (which also plays into the conversation about celibacy and "God being enough"), nor did the animals and birds. Adam needed another human. Yes, God made that human female so they could "multiply and fill the earth"

but God's initial goal for creating Eve was companionship for Adam.

Wrapping It Up

As you can see, the conversation regarding homosexuality and the Bible isn't as black and white as we were taught as teens and young adults. Studying this topic is a complex, multi-layered journey, one that pulls you into the ancient world and brings you closer to the God that made us all.



GIL & GAIL VOLLMERING



Nourish Your Faith



WHAT DO YOU WANT?

By Chris Altmock

Jesus loved to ask questions. It was his favorite way of responding to questions asked of him. And it was a common tool Jesus used in interactions with many people. We find one of those instances recorded in Luke 18. Jesus is traveling toward Jerusalem and a blind man calls out for him. Jesus approaches the man and asks, "What do you want me to do for you?" (Lk. 18:41).

This is a provocative question. One which offers an opportunity for reflection. Take a moment, with eyes closed, to picture Jesus before you. He sees you. He hears you. He knows you. You matter greatly to Jesus. Now, imagine Jesus asking you this question: "What do you want me to do for you?" Sit with his question for a moment. How might you respond? What word or phrase best summarizes your answer to his question? You are safe in Jesus' presence to answer in any way you desire. Try to move beyond the first thing that comes to mind. Go deeper. Hold that word or phrase in your mind for a moment.

Now, with eyes still closed, imagine the roles are reversed. You're the one asking the question. You see Jesus. You hear Jesus. You desire to know Jesus more and more. He matters greatly to you. Imagine asking Jesus, "Jesus, what do you want me to do for you?" How might Jesus respond? What word or phrase might summarize his reply? Try your best to hear his answer to your question. Hold that word or phrase in your mind for a moment.

Now, pray: "Thank you Jesus for caring about what I need and want. What I most want you to do for me at this moment is _____. And Jesus, thank you for inviting me to care about what you need and want. I trust that what you most desire me to do for you at this moment is _____."

If you are a visual person, please go to my YouTube Spiritual Exercise of ["What Do You Want?"](#)

SALLY GARY

RECONCILE AND REFORM CONFERENCE

OCTOBER 28-30
PHOENIX, AZ



JOIN CENTERPEACE AT THE REFORMATION PROJECT CONFERENCE!

Phoenix, AZ or Online Livestream

Opening Keynote speaker is CenterPeace's Executive Director **Sally Gary**, who will be sharing her journey of how she became affirming. Plus, hear from **Matthew Vines**, **Jen Hatmaker** and more. Don't miss it!

Starting this year, The Reformation Project and CenterPeace will alternate hosting conferences so come join us in supporting this event!

[Register here](#)



RESOURCE SPOTLIGHT: BLOG "BLUE BABIES PINK"

For nine years, B.T. Harman kept a secret journal of thoughts on being gay and Christian, knowing one day he'd shout the story he feared most. One Tuesday morning, he logged on Facebook and began shouting.

He started by publishing a Gossip Guide to his sexuality—a cheeky way to let friends know his secret. He then began sharing the vivid details of his story through a 44-episode memoir, published as one episode per day. Each episode combined visually-rich prose and stunning photography. He called the story Blue Babies Pink.

Within days, word began to spread. Though there was no advertising or major publicity, people began to share the story through social media. Thousands of readers tuned in, eagerly waiting for the daily installment to be released. Several readers called it "the Netflix of blogs."

To date, Blue Babies Pink has drawn nearly 100,000 readers from around the world and spawned a 2,200 mile, five city "Bookless Tour." In 2017, the series released as a podcast and hit number one on the iTunes Religion/Spirituality chart and the top 50 of all podcasts worldwide.

BLUE BABIES PINK

A SOUTHERN COMING OUT
STORY IN 44 EPISODES
CREATED BY B.T. HARMAN

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"...the Netflix of blogs."



Click [HERE](#) to start reading "Blue Babies Pink" by BT Harman. A recommended resource list can be found on the [CenterPeace Resource Page](#)



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A place to belong

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