

# A Renewed Look at the Bible and Homosexuality

*Examining the Six Commonly Cited anti-LGBTQ+ Verses (or “Clobber Passages”) with Common Sense and Making a Biblical Case for LGBTQ+ Affirmation*

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## Summary

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# 1. Introduction and a Primer on How to Read the Bible for Accuracy

## Content Warning:

This lesson plan is not appropriate for children. It details much of what the Bible has to say about homosexuality and sex in general. So, please keep in mind that this discussion will necessarily need maturity.

Likewise, this lesson plan may ruffle some feathers as it is ultimately asserting that a consistent condemnation of homosexuality is not in the Bible. Please have the participants of this study pray together and seek to understand this lesson and one another before attempting to make themselves understood.

## The Problem at Hand:

- 1. It's not a choice:** Overwhelming sociological, psychological, and biological data informs the perspective that homosexuality is not merely a lifestyle choice. So, attempts at stopping or changing would be deeply damaging. And in fact, there is an incredibly high rate of suicide among those who have undergone conversion therapy.
- 2. We're casting aside people God loves:** All people are created in the image of God. As such, the Church has found ways to accept those often deemed "unacceptable" by society (such as felons and recovering addicts). And yet, there largely remains a refusal to accept LGBTQ+ folks. Regardless of our findings in these verses, this mistreatment is sinful.
- 3. We're subjecting LGBTQ+ folks to great harm:** The burden imposed on LGBTQ+ folks by churches and society in general is a great evil. Violence, abuse, oppression, and discrimination are being done to LGBTQ+ folks at alarming rates. The Church has a duty to support, not denounce people in need.
- 4. Our "middle grounds" aren't working:** The attempts to find a "middle ground" wherein LGBTQ+ folks must renounce any romantic relationships is deeply psychologically damaging. Likewise, the attempts by churches to find a "middle ground" wherein they remain silent on this issue is a complacent silence that reinforces the harm being done. Not speaking out against ongoing abuse enables more abuse.
- 5. It's not biblical:** This damage is done without sufficient justification. While about six verses in the Bible apparently condemn homosexuality, this largely stems from popular misunderstandings. While it is certainly true that some "biblical" preachers and churches have condemned homosexuality, we need to assess if they are reading the Bible fairly.

## How Do We Know We're Reading the Bible Appropriately?

Of course, a variety of different churches and denominations read the same Bible for its plain meaning and yet do not always come to the same conclusion. But, that can only go so far. Take a sentence like "I saw the duck with my telescope." That could mean that you saw a duck with your telescope tucked under its wing. It could also mean you looked through your telescope and saw a duck. It can't mean you saw an alligator with your cell phone. All that to say, we will be using a few common sense presumptions when working with a scripture:

1. While the Bible is inspired by God, it was written by humans in a specific time and place.
2. The intended meaning of a verse is what the inspired writer sought to convey, it is not simply whatever we wish or have been previously taught to see in that verse.
3. The writer made use of a specific language and referenced specific cultures when conveying the message.
4. The correct meaning of a verse is the one that takes the least amount of liberties with that language and culture. Where there are no points of confusion or controversy, there is the intended meaning.

## Should the Bible be Reasonable?

The Bible is our ultimate authority as Christians. We simply have no room to call ourselves Christians and then flagrantly disavow the Bible's witness. And yet, within the Bible itself, we see numerous examples of people being taught to read scripture in a more life-giving, reasonable way. Jesus' disagreements with the Pharisees about the proper interpretation of scripture and His instruction that a "good tree bears good fruit (Matthew 7:17-18)" indicates that reasonableness should inform our interpretation of scripture. The use of reason alongside scripture is also what allowed the early church to include Gentiles at the expense of Old Testament law (Acts 15:1-19). And historically, this method of interpretation has been used to (among others)...

1. resolve the North American church's controversies over slavery in the 1800s,
2. accept a heliocentric model of the solar system,
3. decenter the practice of snake handling, faith healings, etc.,
4. support movements for women's equality throughout church history.

That is not to say that reason should be elevated above scripture, but that unjust, untenable, and destructive outcomes of widely held beliefs should be cause for Christians to seriously examine scripture, making full use of their reason for an interpretation that better reflects the heart of God.

I especially want to recall for us that the Bible was used both to support and denounce North American slavery in the 1800s. While it would be unfruitful to compare and contrast the treatment of

LGBTQ+ folks in the church to the institution of slavery in North America, what should be noted is that those who supported slavery from the Bible did so by making a broad assumption that the first way they understood a scripture is what that scripture intended to convey the entire time. That is, they used verses that have been translated to say “slaves” as their justification without further exploring the context of those verses to better understand if slavery in the ancient world could reasonably be compared to the North American slave trade. It's only in retrospect that we can see clearly that they were appealing to a convenient-for-them interpretation and translation of the Bible.

In a similar sense, this lesson series intends to demonstrate that the apparent condemnation of homosexuality in the Bible is a relatively modern understanding of scripture that is unreasonable, irresponsible, and ultimately sourced in a series of misunderstandings and mistranslations; not in the Bible itself.

## The Bible's Sexual Ethics are Bigger than Homosexuality:

It is also worth noting here that while this study intends to walk through each commonly cited “clobber passage” in a straightforward manner, there is something to be said about cherry-picking convenient passages on the Bible's vision for sexual ethics. That is, we can appreciate that six verses is a sparse witness. So much so that a greater argument could likely be made for snake handling as an essential of our faith. And yet, divorce is much more widely written about in the Bible with even Jesus Himself discussing it at length in the Sermon on the Mount. While it would be wise to refrain from whataboutisms in this study, it does seem appropriate to interrogate the willingness to come down hard against the LGBTQ+ community by way of appealing to the Bible while simultaneously sidestepping Biblical appeals that denounce divorcees. This method of interpretation begs the question; do people want the Bible's vision of sexual ethics to rule the day or only the parts of it that are convenient for them?

## Apples-to-Apples Approach:

We also have to keep in mind that we are looking at an apples-to-apples approach here. In other words, we are not comparing the worst people we could possibly imagine who happen to be gay with the best people we could possibly imagine who happen to be straight. Nor are we comparing an orgy to a marriage. We are comparing a loving relationship between two people of the same gender with a loving relationship between two people of different genders.

## The Scope of this Study:

In order to keep this study as focused and concise as possible, we will not be able to properly unpack the theological, pastoral, ethical, and other dimensions of human sexuality. Nor will we provide a case for exactly how the Bible is inspired, infallible, or inerrant. Similarly, we will not be providing a theology of Christian marriage.

While those and other questions certainly have validity, the scope of this study is only to unpack the commonly cited “clobber passages” alongside common sense understanding. Other reading and reflection is, of course, encouraged.

## 2. Obvious Examples of Reading a Condemnation of Homosexuality into the Bible

There are a handful of times when no mention of homosexuality is in the cited scripture at all. Instead, some folks have read around the Bible and made a conclusion not based on what is actually said. Before we go further, we need to clarify that these are not valid uses of the Bible. These are instead examples of reading our own agenda into the Bible.

### “Adam and Eve, not Adam and Steve”

This is an *ad ignorantiam* argument (claiming that the absence of affirmation equates to the presence of condemnation). It can just as easily be noted that Adam and Eve had two sons and yet we clearly know this is not a condemnation of having daughters. More broadly, the story of Adam and Eve has a specific purpose. We cannot read into it whatever we want.

### “Christian Marriage” and the Household Codes (Ephesians 5:22-6:9, Colossians 3:18-4:1)

These are the verses used most often as depictions of Christian marriage. However, when they are used to infer an anti-LGBTQ+ message, they become another *ad ignorantiam* argument. While these verses do uplift specifically a man and a woman marrying, it is not condemning all homosexual relationships in doing so. We should note that the Bible mentions dogs several times but never mentions cats. If we employed this same logic, we would be barred from owning cats!

There are three potential reasons the Bible uplifts solely a man and a woman in these verses on marriage:

1. The Biblical author had a predominantly heterosexual audience in mind and therefore used language that would be fitting for them similar to how we might refer to a group of men and women as “those guys.”
2. The Biblical author was speaking to a specific issue at a specific time and was not attempting to make a blanket statement about all relationships for the rest of time.
3. The Biblical author may have really meant for Christian marriage to be solely between men and women. However, while we are deferring discussion of Christian marriage for another time, we would do well to remember that relationships outside of Christian marriage are not de facto sins. For instance, a married atheist couple would not constitute a Christian marriage and yet we would not claim they are committing a sexual sin.

## “Alien flesh” (Jude 7)

This is a strange scripture that needs a lot more unpacking than we have time for now. However, for now, note that it is referring to sex with angels/messengers from God and is likely an allusion to the Nephilim of Genesis 6:1-4. It is not even tangentially condemning LGBTQ+ folks.

## “Uncovering Noah’s nakedness” (Genesis 9:20-22)

After Noah got drunk and fell asleep in his tent, his son Ham came in and “uncovered his nakedness,” resulting in Noah pronouncing a curse upon him. While it is true that “uncovering his nakedness” is likely a reference to sexual sin, we can note that there is no mention of homosexuality as the issue. Consider that it would have been just as much of a sexual sin if Ham were a daughter rather than a son.

### 3. The Levitical Holiness Code: Universal, Cultural, and/or Applicable?

Leviticus 18:22 very clearly forbids homosexual acts and Leviticus 20:13 describes the proper punishment therein. However, we must determine if these verses are applicable to us. That is, Leviticus offers both **universal calls** (do not murder, do not steal, etc) as well as **cultural calls** (do not eat pork, do not wear clothes of two different fabric types, etc). In order to figure out what kind of call 18:22 and 20:13 are, we need to examine the broader context of these verses in the Bible. Both of these verses are found within a section called the “holiness code” found in Leviticus 17-26.

#### What was the holiness code and is it applicable to Christians?

The holiness code was a strict set of rules for the Hebrew people when they were a fledgling group, before entering the Promised Land of Israel. At this time in Israel’s history, they had to be strict or risk being killed by or assimilated into another group. In fact, it says as much in Leviticus 18:3; these verses were about staying distinct from the Egyptians and the Canaanites. As such, it should be noted that holiness here does not mean “closeness to God” so much as it means “identifies and participates fully in the ways of God’s chosen people (the Hebrews) rather than the Canaanites.” This is our first clue that these are not universal calls.

Our second clue as to whether or not these are universal calls is by taking the holiness code as a whole. That is, we can check all of the Levitical holiness code and see if there are other laws that are clearly cultural and not universal. When we do, we can appreciate that chapter 17 and 22 discusses a number of sacrifices and food laws that do not apply to us. In Leviticus 19:19, we are forbidden from planting two kinds of seed in a single field and forbidden from wearing clothes made from two different animals. In 19:27, we are forbidden from trimming our beards. In chapters 23 through 25, we receive instructions for festivals that we no longer perform, the year of Jubilee, etc.

#### What were these verses addressing in the first place?

Other Bible verses give us reason to believe that the Canaanites had a harvest festival that apparently employed ritualistic male-on-male sex acts. While the Canaanite religion itself is mostly lost to time, the Bible is likely referring to these festivals in Deuteronomy 23:17 and 1 Kings 14:24, 15:12, 22:46, and 23:7, barring Israelites from participating as male-on-male ritual prostitutes. As such, it is likely that Leviticus 18:22 is a continuation of 18:21, another consequence of participation in Canaanite rituals. That is, even within the cultural context of the day, these cultural calls were about cultic rituals that employed male-on-male sex, not about homosexuality itself.

## Conclusion:

There is no reason to conclude that Leviticus 18:22 or its punishment in Leviticus 20:13 are applicable outside of its original context. And even in its original context, these laws were directed at cult practices, not gay people. Further, any claims that we ought to follow these calls as though they were universal would necessitate us also following the rest of the holiness code; never trimming our beard, keeping the feast of unleavened bread, and not wearing clothes of two different fabric types.



## 4. What was the Sin of Sodom?

See Genesis 19:1-11. In desert cultures, hospitality codes were strictly enforced for overnight travelers (referenced in Job 31:32, Leviticus 19:33-34, and Hebrew 13:2). They state that you were to allow travelers into your home so they would not freeze in the desert night. With that in mind, Lot gives two angels / messengers from God a place to stay. But, later that evening, men surround the house and demand that they be allowed to gang rape the travelers. Lot offers his daughters to the men instead of breaking the hospitality code. But, the men refuse and attempt to force their way in.

### What's this story actually condemning?

This story does not state what sin occurred here. Inferences have been made that the sin was men attempting to have sex with men. However, others point to it being about attempting to hold travelers hostage and rape them (or put more kindly, breaking the hospitality code). Thankfully, other verses in the Bible reference this story and clarify which interpretation is proper.

- Ezekiel 16:48- 50 - the sin of Sodom was arrogantly not helping the poor and needy but instead doing detestable things. Note that it does not tell us what these “detestable things” were.
- Wisdom of Solomon 19:13-17 - an apocryphal text stating the sin of Sodom was treating travelers as slaves and brutalizing them.
- Partial references (naming that Sodom was sinful but not what sin specifically) are found in Isaiah 1:10-17, 3:9, Jeremiah 23:14, Zephaniah 2:8-11, 2 Peter 2:6-9, etc. But, they do not give further information on the nature of the sin.
- Jesus references this story in Matthew 10:5-15. In it, Jesus is sending out the twelve disciples and instructs them to seek lodging and food wherever they go. Then He says that if they are not shown hospitality, the town that did not welcome them will not fare as well as Sodom.

Every reference to this story in the Bible, including that of Jesus Himself, points to this being an issue of a lack of hospitality (a kind way of saying the issue was holding people hostage and raping them).

### Conclusion:

This is not a condemnation of homosexuality. In fact, we must see the sad irony of how these verses are used. These verses are concerned with welcoming others and showing hospitality, and condemns the brutality and abuse these messengers faced. Currently, these same verses are being used to justify brutality and abuse at the expense of welcome and hospitality.

## 5. Translating the New Testament List of Sins

Twice (once in 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 and again in 1 Timothy 1:9-10), there is a list of sins in which homosexuality apparently appears. As they are extremely similar, down to the same Greek terms in question, we will treat them as one here. And, as these are items on a list, there is no story to go on or cross-reference to locate. Instead, we must simply check that these verses are being translated correctly. To that end, check these verses in different Bible translations and you will see where the problem arises. Translators are unsure whether the list contains “male prostitutes,” “homosexuals,” “practicing homosexuals,” “child molesters,” etc. Note that Martin Luther and John Calvin’s Bibles did not translate these verses to say “homosexuals.” Translations suggesting the use of “homosexuals” began only in the mid-1900s and are still not a consensus understanding among translators.

### 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 in different Bible translations:

- *Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. (1 Cor 6:9-10, ESV, a margin note reads, “The two Greek terms translated by this phrase refer to the passive and active partners in consensual homosexual acts”)*
- *Do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived! The sexually immoral, idolaters, adulterers, male prostitutes, men who engage in illicit sex, thieves, the greedy, drunkards, revilers, swindlers—none of these will inherit the kingdom of God. (1 Cor 6:9-10, NRSVue)*
- *Are you not aware that wrongdoers will never inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived! Fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, male prostitutes, sodomites, thieves, extortioners, drunkards, slanderers, swindlers—none of these will inherit the kingdom of God. (1 Cor 6:9-10, NCB)*
- *Wisset ihr nicht, daß die Ungerechten das Reich Gottes nicht ererben werden? Lasset euch nicht verführen! Weder die Hurer noch die Abgöttischen noch die Ehebrecher noch die Weichlinge noch die Knabenschänder noch die Diebe noch die Geizigen noch die Trunkenbolde noch die Lästerer noch die Räuber werden das Reich Gottes ererben. (1 Cor 6:9-10, Luther’s Bible)*
- *Ἡ οὐκ οἶδατε ὅτι ἄδικοι Θεοῦ βασιλείαν οὐ κληρονομήσουσιν? Μὴ πλανᾶσθε: οὔτε πόρνοι, οὔτε εἰδωλόλατραι, οὔτε μοιχοὶ, οὔτε μαλακοὶ, οὔτε ἀρσενικοῖται, οὔτε κλέπται, οὔτε πλεονέκται, οὐ μέθυσοι, οὐ λοίδοροι, οὐχ ἄρπαγες, βασιλείαν Θεοῦ κληρονομήσουσιν. (1 Cor 6:9-10, Greek)*

### What’s the proper translation?

Thankfully, we have the Greek that we can check against. Two Greek terms are used, “*malakoi*” and “*arsenokoitai*.” In context, “... *oute malakoi, oute arsenokoitai*...” where “*oute*” is readily translated as “nor.”

*Malakoi* literally translates to “soft” and is typically in reference to fabrics. When used in reference to morals, it could be translated as “loose” or “unrestrained.” There is absolutely no way in which it is in specific reference to homosexuality. The translation of “male prostitutes” seems apt.

*Arsenokoitai* is more difficult to translate. Outside of these lists, it is unused in other biblical texts. Likewise, it is unused in any surviving Greek texts from that time period. However, it can be noted that it is a compound word. *Arseno* refers to human men, plain and simple. *Koitai* comes from the word meaning “bed” and is a reference to laying with someone. So, together, this term would literally be “men-sleeper” or “bed-men.” But, this doesn’t do much to clarify what is being said here.

## What is a bed-man?

Some scholars assert that *arsenokoitai* (bed-men) is referring to sexual perverts. Others believe it is referring to male-on-male prostitution that was rampant in the area when these verses were written. For instance, Antony (of Antony and Cleopatra) was a male prostitute in his younger years. Still others note the inherent difficulty with compound words; butterflies have little to do with butter! Beyond this, we are at something of a loss. We simply do not know what this term is specifically referring to.

However, it can be quickly noted that these verses cannot be mere references to homosexuality as homosexuality was not a recognized category within sexuality at that time. Greco-Roman culture simply did not think in terms of heterosexuality and homosexuality. They thought in terms of a dominant and a passive partner (the ESV margin note does well to make reference to this, but stops short and makes a judgment call in their translation that needs to be scrutinized). In the Greco-Roman way of thinking, a dominant partner ought to pair themselves with a passive partner. However, they understood young boys to be included in the group of potential passive partners. So, it was normative for an older man and a younger boy to be in a sexual relationship. That is to say, even if we could conclude that “bed-men” was a reference to men who practiced sexual activity outside of the dominant-passive pairing, a relationship that we would today refer to as homosexual in nature would have been seen as fair game.

All in all, *arsenokoitai* cannot be read simply as “homosexuals” because that is a very pointed translation of an ambiguous term, and because there was no concept of homosexuality as we understand it now. It must be that there were other issues surrounding the “bed-men.”

## Conclusion:

These verses have been translated in a ton of different ways over the years. But, translating them as a condemnation of homosexuality is a modern occurrence and is clearly inaccurate when held up to any sort of historical scrutiny.

## 6. Understanding Paul's Theological Argument in Romans

The specific verses in question are Romans 1:26-27, *“For this reason God gave them over to dishonorable passions. Their females exchanged natural intercourse for unnatural, and in the same way also the males, giving up natural intercourse with females, were consumed with their passionate desires for one another. Males committed shameless acts with males and received in their own persons the due penalty for their error.”* (NRSVue)

What is even happening in Romans 1 to begin with?

In this chapter, Paul is arguing that we have ceased looking to what was apparent about God and instead became focused on the creation/world, not the Creator (verses 18-23). As such, this shift in focus has caused an inward shift of passions (24-27). In doing so, we have opened the door for sin (28-32). Put another way, Paul is making a double-bound point here about our human nature.

Looks to Creator → has in character passions → does not sin

OR

Looks to world → has out-of-character passions → sins

Notice that in verses 28-32, Paul lists a wide variety of sins that result from out-of-character passions and he does not mention homosexuality in them. Instead, the apparent condemnation of homosexuality is an example Paul is using to describe the out-of-character passions. Think of it like this; Paul is saying that a shift from God to creation is so radical, it would be like waking up tomorrow morning and suddenly being attracted to the opposite gender. This is not a condemnation, this is a functional example Paul is using.

What's “natural” and “unnatural” intercourse?

Beyond noting that Paul is not listing “unnatural intercourse” as a sin, but using it as a functional example of our shift from God to creation, we can further see that this is not a condemnation of homosexuality by understanding more fully what Paul means by “unnatural intercourse.” Two possibilities as to what “unnatural” means are possible:

1. **Breaking a law of nature:** Paul could be saying men are defying a law of nature that says men have a passion for women. Therefore, homosexuality is to be understood as going against a cosmic law of nature (which could be problematized by noting that other species, not clouded by sin, have high rates of homosexual encounters).
2. **Acting out of character:** Paul could be saying men are acting unnaturally (or “out of character”) and having sex with other men. This would infer that Paul is using “men” here as a shorthand for “straight men” and is therefore merely presuming a predominantly heterosexual audience, not taking issue with homosexuality itself.

The first option is a condemnation of homosexuality and the second is a condemnation of straight men having gay sex. To understand how Paul is using the term, let us look to Romans 11:24 where Paul uses “unnatural” (*para physin*) once more. “*For if you have been cut from what is by nature a wild olive tree and grafted, contrary to nature, into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these natural branches be grafted back into their own olive tree.*” (Romans 11:24, NRSVue).

In this verse, Paul is expounding on his argument that Gentiles have been grafted into God’s covenantal relationship with Israel. And here, it is plain to us that God was not defying nature, God was acting out of character. Therefore, we can conclude that Paul is using the term “unnatural” or *para physin* to mean the second option in Romans 1 (unnatural as “out of character”). He was merely presuming a predominantly heterosexual audience to discuss people acting out of character as they became consumed with their passions, he was not taking issue with homosexuality itself. If we restated Romans 1:26-27 making use of the way Paul uses “unnatural” later in his letter, it would read as follows:

*“For this reason God gave them over to dishonorable passions. Their females exchanged [their characteristic] intercourse for [intercourse that was out of character], and in the same way also the males, giving up [those men’s characteristic] intercourse with females, were consumed with their passionate desires for one another. Males committed shameless acts with males and received in their own persons the due penalty for their error.”* (Romans 1:26-27, NRSVue with “unnatural” retranslated to better fit with Paul’s use of the term in Romans 11:24)

It was in those men’s character to have intercourse with women in the first place. Otherwise, the verses just wouldn’t make any sense. So, simply, Paul’s not talking about gay people, he’s talking about straight people having gay sex / untamed passions. (We should note, by the way, it would be “unnatural” to force gay folks to have a straight relationship).

## Conclusion:

These verses are about a shift in our passions that happen as a result of losing sight of God. While Paul uses (what we would call today) a heterosexual functional example, his issue is that the passions are out of character, not that they’re heterosexual or homosexual in nature. We can infer that he’d be appalled with how LGBTQ+ folks are pressured to live in an out-of-character way. In fact, if we may be so bold, a good reading of Romans 1 would suggest that Paul is actually calling us to love whomever it may be that God has designed us to love.

## 7. Appreciating Stories of LGBTQ+ Representation in the Bible

There are a handful of stories in the Bible that actually mention clear LGBTQ+ relationships and make no condemnation of them. Additionally, there are a handful of ambiguous occurrences that do not explicitly name an LGBTQ+ relationship but leave the door open for folks to see themselves in.

### Jonathan and David (1 Samuel 18:1-4; 20:30, 41-42; 2 Samuel 1:26)

1 Samuel 18:1-4 recounts a striking show of affection from Jonathan to the young David. Then, in 20:30, king Saul has an outburst at Jonathan for his relationship with David. The Hebrew renders the precise nature of this outburst ambiguously but the Septuagint leaves it open to render this verse as Saul deriding Jonathan for his intimate companionship with David. Later, in 1 Samuel 20:41-42, David and Jonathan kiss one another, weep together, and uplift their bond eternally before the Lord before leaving one another. Finally, at the time of Jonathan's death, David says in 2 Samuel 1:26 that Jonathan's love for him surpassed that of a woman. For the earliest readers of these verses, this would have read as the intimate love between two military men.

### Naomi and Ruth (Book of Ruth)

This is a more ambiguous occurrence. But, some see the story of Naomi and Ruth as a model of LGBTQ+ love. They vow to go wherever the other goes and to share life together. Of course, it could be argued that these two were nothing more than close friends. But, it ought to be noted here as one way some in the LGBTQ+ community have been able to see themselves in the Bible.

### Jesus Addressing "Sexual Minorities" (Matthew 19:12)

The only time Jesus Himself talks about any "sexual minorities," for lack of a better term, is with regard to the eunuchs (men who were castrated, often at a young age to make them easier to work with as slaves). To be clear, Jesus never said anything about gay people one way or the other. So, eunuchs, though not at all a 1:1 stand-in for gay people, are the only examples of Jesus talking about "sexual minorities." And in Matthew 19:12, he commends them as models of those who seek God's Kingdom.

## 8. Review and Conclusion

### Verses and Terms that have Nothing to do with LGBTQ+ folks:

- “Adam and Eve, not Adam and Steve” - an ad ignorantium argument. Adam and Eve had two sons, but this is not a condemnation of having daughters either.
- “Christian marriage” - we are not advocating for Christian LGBTQ+ marriages here. Instead, we are only asking if homosexuality is condemned. And we can observe that a depiction of heterosexual, Christian marriage is not the same thing as a condemnation of all LGBTQ+ relationships.
- “Alien flesh” (Jude 7) - this is a reference to the Nephilim, not gay people.
- “Uncovering Noah’s nakedness” - this is clearly a sexual sin but there is no mention that it was sinful for being homosexual in nature. We can plainly see it would be sinful even if it were a man and his daughter.

### Reassessing Old Testament Verses:

- Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 - These verses are not applicable laws for today and even in their original context were about remaining distinct from the Canaanites, not about a blanket condemnation of homosexuality.
- Genesis 19:1-11 - This is not a condemnation of homosexuality. In fact, we must see the sad irony of how these verses are used. These verses are concerned with welcoming others and showing hospitality, and condemns the brutality and abuse these messengers faced. Currently, these same verses are being used to justify brutality and abuse at the expense of welcome and hospitality.
- 1 Samuel 18:1-4, 20:30, 41-42, 2 Samuel 1:26 - quite clearly an account of king David having a homoerotic relationship with Johnathan.

### Reassessing New Testament Verses:

- 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, 1 Timothy 1:9-10 - These verses have been translated in a ton of different ways over the years. But, translating them as a condemnation of homosexuality is a modern occurrence that does not hold up to any kind of historical scrutiny.
- Romans 1:18-32 - These verses are about a shift in our passions that happen as a result of losing sight of God. While Paul uses hetero-normative sexuality in his functional example, his issue is that the passions are out of character, not that they’re homosexual in nature. We can infer that he’d be appalled with how LGBTQ+ folks are pressured to live in an out-of-character way.
- Matthew 19:12 - The only time Jesus ever addressed any “sexual minorities,” He affirms them as models of those who seek God’s Kingdom.

## In conclusion:

The verses we have overviewed make up a near-exhaustive list of the verses supposedly condemning homosexuality. And, upon a common sense, reasonable review of them, we found that they are largely mistranslations and misunderstandings. Further, while we were unable to unpack the Bible's entire witness in this study, we recognize that these are a small handful of verses amidst a large backdrop of calls to welcome, love, show hospitality, and support those who have been all too often cast off by society.

While it may be fruitful to further explore related issues like the nature of Christian marriage, ways we can include and show hospitality to the LGBTQ+ community as Christians, pastoral and theological arguments one way or the other, etc.; we will have to leave that for another time and place. Similarly, for those in the LGBTQ+ community, it may be fruitful to further affirm and explore your identity as an LGBTQ+ Christian now that these verses have been reassessed in a more common sense, life-giving manner. But, we will have to leave that for another time and place, too.

Finally, while I am sure that this conclusion will be shocking to some, I want to invite us to close this study by considering where that shock is coming from. That is, the scope of this study was to examine these verses with some basic common sense tools. And so, in all candor, this is "biblical." It may well be that some who have made anti-LGBTQ+ remarks through their use of scripture disapprove of this study. But, that is not to say that they have made a substantive disagreement with this study's findings. Put more simply, especially given the abuse condoned by and even at times encouraged by the Christian Church towards LGBTQ+ folks; we must be clear as to whether our "biblical worldviews" are really even coming from the Bible.

At this time, we lament the damage and abuse being done to LGBTQ+ folks in the Name of Jesus Christ. We lament, just the same, for the willingness of Christians to look the other way and pass by a la the Priest and the Levite in the story of the Good Samaritan. And yet, we hope that this study encourages us to speak the truth in love, knowing that "good trees bear good fruit."