

“THINK ON THESE THINGS”

Philippians 4:8

Those Who Make Peace

By Joe R. Price

“17 Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. 18 If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men” (Romans 12:17–18, NKJV).

The gospel forbids retaliation and taking personal vengeance. To do so disrespects God and His righteous vengeance against evildoers: ***“Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, ‘Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,’ says the Lord”*** (Rom. 12:19). Therefore, Christians are to overcome evil with good by doing all we can to live peaceably with others (Rom. 12:21). We can seek peace and pursue it (1 Pet. 3:10-11; Heb. 12:14). For example, the carnally minded say, “I’ll never make peace with him because he wronged me.” But Christians are to be peacemakers, not conflict promoters (Matt. 5:9). The carnally minded say, “I’ll get even with him.” But Christians turn the other cheek instead of retaliating in kind (Matt. 5:38-42). The carnally minded say, “He wronged me once, and I’ll never trust him again.” But Christians forgive as God in Christ forgave us (Eph. 4:31-32). To be a peacemaker takes self-control, sacrifice, and selflessness. Wisdom from above is peaceable because it is ***“pure”*** and ***“willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy”*** (James 3:17). Peace does not happen on its own. Peacemakers wisely sow ***“the fruit of righteousness”*** to ***“make peace”*** (James 3:18; Matt. 5:9). – ***SWORD TIPS***, #2298, June 28, 2021. ■

“Born That Way?”

Today, many are currently arguing that homosexuals have a moral “right” to be such. Some, in an attempt to justify homosexuality, argue they were “born that way” and have no choice regarding their sexual preference. I am persuaded that even some brethren, lacking either a basic knowledge of God’s Word or lacking Godly conviction, would agree with this false idea.

It would be profitable to briefly study several key scriptures from God’s Holy Book to determine His attitude toward the unholy, depraved conduct of those who practice homosexuality. First it is needful to consider the definition of homosexuality, as well as definitions of several other related words that will enable us to better understand God’s will toward such behavior. That is the goal of this brief article. It has often been said that a well-defined proposition is half argued.

DEFINITIONS

Webster’s Dictionary defines the word homosexuality as: (1) The quality or state of being homosexual; (2) Erotic activity with another of the same sex.

The word homosexual as defined by Webster means: “of, relating to, or characterized by a tendency to direct sexual desire toward another of the same sex” (Webster’s Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary).

When we consider the definition of the word fornication, it is clearly evident that “erotic activity with another of the same sex” (homosexuality) is included. Thayer defines fornication this way: “prop. of illicit sexual intercourse in general,” (p. 532). This definition would include at least homosexuality, lesbianism, incest, rape, pedophilia, whoredom, and adultery—sins which if practiced, will prohibit the ones so practicing from entering

into the Kingdom of God (1 Cor. 6:9-10; Gal. 5:19-21; Eph. 5:3-5; Heb. 13:4; Rev. 21:8).

FROM THE BEGINNING

The very first book of the Bible presents God's truth concerning lawful sexual relationships that being in the sphere of a lawful marriage as defined by God not man. The man is to leave father and mother and cleave to his wife and become one flesh for life (Gen. 2:24; Rom. 7:2, 3).

Looking back to the beginning, we note God created man ***"in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them"*** (Gen. 1:27); and they were commanded to be fruitful and multiply (Gen. 1:28). God created man and woman fundamentally and physically distinct and different, but compatible, with the ability to cleave to each other and become one flesh. Regarding being fruitful, the man needed woman and the woman needed man in order to accomplish this charge. In Genesis 2:18 we find that the Lord saw that it was not good that man should be alone, therefore He made woman, a help meet for him.

Thus from the beginning, the heterosexual relationship is the relationship established by God. In Genesis 3:20 we read that ***"Adam called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living."*** You will notice that for Adam, the Lord made Eve! Eve is described as Adam's wife (she), the ***"mother,"*** not the father, ***"of all living"*** (Gen. 3:20)!

Mankind was created ***"in the image and likeness of God"*** (Gen. 1:26), placed on earth to rule and subdue it and to have dominion over every living thing that moves, thereby; needing the God given ability to make choices and intelligent decisions. In Genesis 3:1-6 we find recorded one of the first choices between right and wrong made by man, the decision whether or not to eat of the fruit of the forbidden tree. The woman (Eve) was first faced with the decision of believing the Truth of God or being beguiled by the father of liars, the devil (Jn. 8:44). Eve failed the test when ***"she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate"*** (Gen. 3:6). Sadly the majority of the world follows Eve's pattern, making the wrong choice by believing a lie rather than accepting God's Word (cf. 2 Cor. 4:3, 4; 2 Thess. 2:10-13). Do not believe the lies being promoted today that falsely claim one's birth sex can be changed with a whim and wish! Believe God's word!

PREFERENCE AND CHOICE

While it is true that we did not have a choice regarding our gender (male or female) when we entered this world at birth, we do have a choice between the heterosexual versus homosexual behavior and relationships in later years. If one chooses the abnormal and sinful relationship of homosexuality over the God ordained, normal and lawful relationship of heterosexuality, then that person is in opposition to God, preferring and choosing an abnormal, depraved, unholy manner of life! More importantly, any heterosexual relationship entered into must be within the bounds of God's law on marriage to be God approved. Just to say the heterosexual relationship is normal, is not enough, for many are engaged in heterosexual relationships that are adulterous and therefore sinful.

But, are homosexuals born that way? No, they choose to be that way, and they themselves make the decision! Fornication is at the top of the list of the works of the flesh that prohibit entrance into the Kingdom of God (Gal. 5:19-21). Fornication is sinful and those who practice homosexuality choose to serve Satan rather than God when they do so. Man was created with the ability to choose whom he would obey, either ***"sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness"*** (Rom. 6:16). When it is argued that homosexuals are "born that way," having no choice, then those who so argue, charge God the creator with being the root-cause of homosexuality. This would be contrary to God's own design, purpose, and will. Why would He create men to be sinful and evil—just to destroy them! Who can believe it? Such reasoning makes God the king of hypocrites and an unjust God, creating ***"in His own image,"*** what He condemns in His Word (Gen. 1:27; Lev. 20:13).

CONSIDERING OTHER SINS

The claim that some are born a homosexual can be shown to be false by asking a few reasonable questions. Are murderers born murderers? What about those ***"filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wick-***

edness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; they are whisperers, backbiters, haters of God violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, unmerciful” (Rom 1:29-31)? Can we say those who practice these sins are “born that way?” Without a doubt the answer is NO! A careful reading of Romans Chapter 1 will shed light on the fact that men *become* sinners and are not born sinners. Men *become* enslaved to sin because of a love for the world (1 Jn. 2:15-17). Note the following quotations from Romans Chapter 1 with some contrasting statements with my emphasis:

- vs. 21 - ***“but became futile in their thoughts”*** – they were NOT born futile!
- vs. 22 - ***“they became fools”***– they were NOT born fools!
- vs. 26 - ***“God gave them up to vile passions”***– God did NOT create them with vile passions.
- vs. 26 - ***“for even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature”*** – they were NOT born against nature.
- vs. 27 - also the men, ***“leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another; men with men committing what is shameful”***– they were NOT born in their lust one toward another.

Paul clearly sums up the Truth about all of this by his statement in verse 28 of the same chapter; those who practice homosexuality and the other sins listed do so because ***“they did not like to retain God in their knowledge”*** (Rom. 1:28).

CONCLUSION

After briefly studying this subject, the only conclusion that can be reached is that homosexuality is sinful and those who practice it will be rejected by God. The Corinthians were warned by Paul to flee the sin of fornication (1 Cor. 6:18)! Nowhere does the apostle Paul reason that man is without a choice in the realm of sexual relationships. Nowhere does the Bible teach that man is incapable of choosing between good or evil. Man has a choice—only man makes this choice! All accountable beings will give an answer to God for the choices they make, whether righteous or unrighteous (Eccl. 12:13, 14; 1 Cor. 10:13; 2 Cor. 5:10). Paul’s instructions to the Corinthians indicate in no uncertain terms that involvement in the sin of fornication is forbidden by God when he commanded them to ***“flee fornication”*** (1 Cor. 6:18)!

The body of a Christian is to be ***“a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God”*** (Rom. 12:1, 2), used for the glory of God. It is not to be used to satisfy the lusts of the flesh. Christians must stand opposed to and teach the truth regarding this false idea that homosexuals are “born that way.” Those involved in sexual immorality choose such a lifestyle and thus become servants of sin! What are the wages of such conduct? Spiritual death (Rom. 6:23)! Let us teach God’s will and show He loves their souls and is not willing that any perish (Jn. 3:16, 17; 2 Pet. 3:9). Sinners and saints of God will stand before God in judgment (2 Cor. 5:10). God will hold accountable all that refuse to repent and obey the gospel (Acts 17:30, 2 Thess. 1:7-9; 1 Pet. 4:17-19)! We pray that all who are participating in the sin of sexual immorality will be willing to search and study the Scriptures and ***“repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance”*** (Acts 20:26). Remember, the Hebrew writer wrote, ***“And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation”*** (Heb. 9:27-28, NKJV). – ***tgmc*** ■

The Bible is . . .

An armory of heavenly weapons, a pharmacy of infallible medicines, a mine of exhaustless wealth, a guidebook for every road, a chart for every sea, a medicine for every malady, and a balm for every wound!

Rob us of our Bible, and our sky has lost its sun! — ***Selected*** ■

Service Times - Sunday: 9:00 & 10:00 AM; 6:00 PM - Wednesday: 7:00 PM

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