

3. Comments on the topic in general

John Stott states:

Because there are only these four biblical references to homosexual behavior, must we then conclude that the topic is marginal to the main thrust of the Bible? Must we further concede that they constitute a rather flimsy basis on which to take a firm stand against a homosexual lifestyle? Are those protagonists right who claim that the biblical prohibitions are "highly specific" -- against violations of hospitality (Sodom and Gibeah), against cultic taboos (Leviticus), against shameless orgies (Romans) and against male prostitution or the corruption of the young (1 Corinthians and 1 Timothy), and that none of these passages alludes, to, let alone condemns, a loving partnership between genuine homosexual inverters? This is the conclusion reached, for example, by Letha Scanzoni and Virginia Mollenkott in their book Is the Homosexual My Neighbor? They write:

The Bible clearly condemns certain kinds of homosexual practice (. . . gang rape, idolatry, and lustful promiscuity). However, it appears to be silent on certain other aspects of homosexuality--both the "homosexual orientation" and "a committed love-relationship analogous to heterosexual monogamy."

But we cannot handle the biblical material in this way. The Christian rejection of homosexual practices does not rest on "a few isolated and obscure proof texts" (as is sometimes said), whose traditional explanation can be overthrown. And it is disturbing to me that those who write on this subject, and include in their treatment a section on the biblical teaching, all seem to deal with it in this way. For example, "Consideration of the Christian attitude to homosexual practices," wrote Sherwin Bailey, "inevitably begins with the story of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah." But this beginning is not at all "inevitable." In fact, it is positively mistaken, for the negative prohibitions of homosexual practices in Scripture make sense only in the light of its positive teaching in Genesis 1 and 2 about human sexuality and heterosexual marriage. Without the teaching of the Bible on sex and marriage, our perspective on the homosexual question is bound to be skewed.
--Homosexual Partnerships, pp. 12-13.

In response to the parallel that gay activists often draw between heterosexual marriages and homosexual partnerships, Stott says that "Scripture defines marriage in terms of heterosexual monogamy. It is the union of one man with one woman, which must be publicly acknowledged (the leaving of parents), permanently sealed (he will 'cleave to his wife') and physically consummated ('one flesh'). And Scripture envisages no other kind of marriage or sexual intercourse, for God provided no alternative. . . . In sum, the only 'one flesh' experience which God intends and Scripture contemplates is the sexual union of a man with his wife, whom he recognizes as 'flesh of his flesh.'

However, those who defend homosexuality are not satisfied with the Bible's teaching on heterosexual marriage, and offer several arguments to