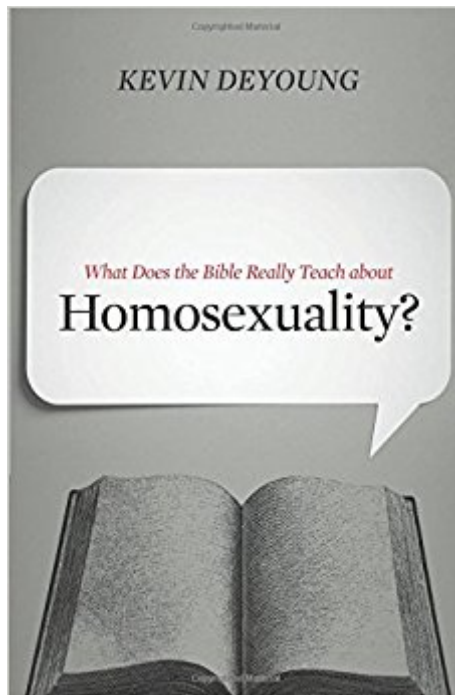




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What Does The Bible Really Teach About Homosexuality?



Synopsis

In this timely book, award-winning author Kevin DeYoung challenges each of us—[the skeptic and the seeker](#), the certain and the confused—to take a humble look at God’s Word regarding the issue of homosexuality. After examining key biblical passages in both the Old and New Testaments and the Bible’s overarching teaching regarding sexuality, DeYoung responds to popular objections raised by Christians and non-Christians alike, making this an indispensable resource for thinking through one of the most pressing issues of our day.

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Customer Reviews

“This book provides a short, accessible, and pastoral toolbox for all Christians to navigate the shifting cultural landscape of sexuality and find confidence and hope in how the Bible directs our steps. DeYoung offers wise and readable apologetics here, providing his readers with both motive and model for how to think and talk about homosexuality and the Christian faith in a way that honors Christ and gives hope to a watching world.”
—Rosaria Butterfield, a former professor of English, Syracuse University; author, *The Secret Thoughts of an Unlikely Convert*
“DeYoung takes on the most pressing issue of our day: whether we will be conformed to the spirit of the age or whether we will follow Christ. Against the sexual revolution and its high priests, DeYoung presents an alternative vision, the ancient wisdom of a Christian sexual ethic. This is the best book on this subject that I have read. Every Christian confronted with these issues, which means every Christian, should read this book. You will finish this book better

equipped to preach the gospel, to love the lost, to welcome the wounded, and to stand up for Jesus and his Word.

—Russell D. Moore, *President, Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention*

“What a gift this book is to the church! Kevin approaches the difficult question of sexuality with compassion and clarity, showing us what God’s Word says about it and why it is important. Well researched, accessibly written, and gospel saturated—this, in my opinion, is now the book on this subject for our generation!”

—J. D. Greear, pastor, The Summit Church, Raleigh-Durham, North Carolina; author, *Gaining by Losing: Why the Future Belongs to Churches that Send*

“A superb, accessible resource for lay people in every walk of life who need help making sense of one of the most critical, defining issues of our day. Kevin DeYoung approaches this highly controversial topic in a way that is biblically faithful, pastorally sensitive, historically in-formed, and culturally aware. The stakes are high. We cannot afford not to understand what Kevin has so helpfully laid out for us here.”

—Nancy DeMoss Wolgemuth, author; Bible teacher; host, *Revive Our Hearts*

“Anyone looking for an accessible, reader-friendly, one-stop treatment of the biblical underpinnings of traditional Christian marriage and sexual ethics would do well to read this book. It is lucid but not simplistic, judicious but not obscure, and convicted but not shrill.”

—Wesley Hill, Assistant Professor of Biblical Studies, Trinity School for Ministry; author, *Washed and Waiting: Reflections on Christian Faithfulness and Homosexuality*

“Kevin DeYoung has written a good and faithful treatment on the Bible and homosexual practice for the average churchgoer. His work addresses most of the main issues and does so in a succinct and articulate manner. I commend it.”

—Robert Gagnon, Associate Professor of New Testament, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary; author, *The Bible and Homosexual Practice*

“In the heated atmosphere that currently surrounds discussion of every aspect of homosexuality, the most important domain where we need careful thinking and constrained rhetoric is what the Bible does and does not say on the matter. With his customary directness and clarity, Kevin DeYoung has now met this need. For those interested in careful exegesis of the relevant passages and patient discussion of the issues that arise from it, packaged in brevity and simplicity, it would be difficult to better this book.”

—D. A. Carson, research professor of New Testament, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School; cofounder, The Gospel Coalition

“DeYoung provides a much-needed resource that addresses the important biblical and theological issues related to homosexuality while maintaining accessibility to a broad readership. The Ten Commitments at the end of this book display DeYoung’s pastoral heart and his understanding that regardless of our vices or virtues, we must preach the

gospel, together strive for holiness, and exalt Christ above all things. — Christopher Yuan, Bible Teacher; speaker; author, *Out of a Far Country: A Gay Son's Journey to God* — “Written with the deftness, clarity, and tender grace we’ve come to expect from DeYoung, *What Does the Bible Really Teach about Homosexuality?* answers, point by point, the revisionist theology making inroads in even the most conservative theological circles. It is simply the very best resource any follower of Christ can have to answer the challenge of homosexuality in the church. — Gregory Koukl, — president, Stand to Reason; author, *Tactics and The Story of Reality* — “Solid exegesis and tight writing make this book stand out. Kevin DeYoung concisely explains the key biblical passages and clearly responds to the key objections. — Marvin Olasky, Editor in Chief, *World* Magazine

Kevin DeYoung (MDiv, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary) is the senior pastor at Christ Covenant Church in Matthews, North Carolina. He serves as a council member at the Gospel Coalition and blogs at DeYoung, Restless, and Reformed. He is assistant professor of systematic theology at Reformed Theological Seminary (Charlotte) and a PhD candidate at the University of Leicester. He is the author of several books, including *Just Do Something*; *Crazy Busy*; and *The Biggest Story*. Kevin and his wife, Trisha, have seven children.

Many people claim that the Bible speaks specifically about homosexuality by simply quoting the few popular verses. Not many offer to begin by asking the fundamental question, “What does the Bible really teach about everything?” This is what author and pastor, Kevin DeYoung did. He goes back to the beginning of creation, the Fall, the land, the temple, the coming Messiah, and the expectant future of a new heaven and new earth. He points out that the Bible is not about God giving us a lecture about homosexuality. Rather, it is learning to see what the Bible really focus on before we even talk about homosexuality. Having said that, he makes this statement about the book, that it is a “Christian book, with a narrow focus, defending a traditional view of marriage.” In other words, DeYoung is writing from a Christian point of view. He is exploring the way the Bible verses talk about homosexuality. It is about defending the traditional view of marriage as between a man and a woman. Aware of the contentious subject, he addresses three groups of potential readers. The first group is the already convinced where he aims to remind them to argue respectfully and appropriately. This means learning to recognize one’s sinfulness and imperfections too. The second group are the skeptics or contentious, where he hopes will argue strictly on biblical grounds rather than on charged up emotions. The third group are the confused or those who just do not know how

to respond. DeYoung is careful to define his terms. He writes more about deliberate activity and intentional choices. "Unless specifically stated otherwise, it should be assumed that in speaking of homosexuality I am talking about the self-determined activity of two or more persons of the same sex to become sexually involved." Like the Bible, he leans toward describing more of "men-with-men sexual behavior." In talking about same-sex marriage, he is upfront about stating his objection to such a marital union. Instead of trying to bring in modernist philosophies like psychology, physiology, sociology, even technology, he aims toward a literal read as a plain method. Part One is about the five specific references in the Bible with regard to homosexual activities. On Genesis 1-2, he gives five reasons why marriage according to the Bible is between a man and a woman. God created the woman as a divine complement for man. The phrase "one flesh" is specifically applied to two persons of the opposite sex. For procreation, Jesus himself reinforces marriage as between a man and a woman. Marriage according to the Bible is about the marital couple being a complementary pair. Gen 19 is essentially about violent gang rape, not some kind of a cordial same-sex relationship. It is pointing out homosexual practice as a serious consequence of sin. Sodom and Gomorrah's city of vice and immorality are places of evil and terrible wrongdoings, and there is no way it can be used to justify that homosexual practices are normal activities in the eyes of God. Lev 18 and 20 paints homosexual practices as against the purity code. For those who point out that Leviticus is not relevant for modern times, the author gives six reasons to argue the opposite. He then moves to the New Testament and discusses Romans 1, saying that it is the "most detailed and significant treatment of homosexuality." Analyzing Paul's arguments, he helps us understand the context. It is about God revealing his wrath upon the sinfulness of people (Rom 1:18-19). It is about the intentional exchange of the glory of God for the sinfulness of man (Rom 1:21-23). It is about men dishonoring their own bodies (Rom 1:24-25). It is about those who give in to their unnatural passions (Rom 1:26-27). As a result, God gave them up to themselves. He shares about 1 Cor 6 and 1 Tim 1 by giving a Greek word study of "malakoi" and "arsenokoitai." The latter is about "homosexual behavior" while the former is plainly about men having sex with men. The Apostle Paul condemns such behavior. Anticipating rebuttals, DeYoung uses Part Two to address some common objections to the interpretations above. Objections such as: "The Bible Hardly Ever Mentions Homosexuality," "Not That Kind of Homosexuality," "What about Gluttony and Divorce?" "The Church Is Supposed to Be a Place for Broken People," "You're on the Wrong Side of History," "It's Not Fair,"

“The God I Worship Is a God of Love”

• Even if opponents argue that homosexuality is only referred to in a few scattered verses in the Bible, they (the Revisionists) will still have to answer why the Bible is overwhelmingly describing marriage as between a man and a woman. Moreover, if the Bible is consistently saying the same things, why must people try to find loopholes or alternative renderings just to fit their bill? Even if people try to distinguish homosexuality at different levels, they will also need to answer why the Bible is consistently negative about homosexual sins. Then there is that age old argument about equating gluttony with homosexual sins. Aren't they the same and aren't we suppose to condemn them equally? Calling this argument as a "red herring" to distract people from addressing homosexuality proper, DeYoung first addresses gluttony before showing that God is equally displeased about homosexuality. The most difficult case would be the one where people claim "It's not fair" either because they were born that way; no gift of celibacy; or to claim God does not want anyone to be "miserable." Probably, by the end of the introduction, those who hold opposing views from DeYoung would have abandoned the reading of this book altogether. It is definitely not an easy book to read if one is not from the traditional interpretation point of view. What DeYoung is trying to drive at is basically to differentiate between what God's Word says and what we feel. As described by Jackie Hill in her "Love Letter to a Lesbian," DeYoung cites the following: "You see what God has to say about homosexuality, but your heart doesn't utter the same sentiments. God's word says it's sinful; your heart says it feels right. God's word says it's abominable; your heart says it's delightful. God's word says it's unnatural; your heart says it's totally normal. Do you see that there is a clear divide between what God's word says and how your heart feels?" Is love the answer to everything? Not unless it is supported by the biblical text. For without the biblical text, any of love is vulnerable to shifting emotions and fickle minds. DeYoung is bold to even write such a book, especially when the modern climate is increasingly hostile to tradition and conservative views. They claim that we need to be progressive, but DeYoung asserts the need to heed the biblical texts as they are. They claim that we need to let love rule but the author insists on letting the biblical texts be the foundation of any love. They claim to interpret the historical texts differently from tradition but DeYoung challenges them to see the general theme of what the Bible says about marriage, of sin, and of sexual immorality. Homosexuality is a hotly debated and contested topic nowadays. I do not foresee an end to the controversy. What is most helpful is for readers to know that this book is clearly about why marriage ought to be between a man and a woman, why the Bible condemns homosexuality,

and why it is important to read the Bible as it is, without revising it to fit modern needs. This book will certainly not solve the impasse but I think it would help those holding the traditional view of marriage understand the reasons for their position. Speak the truth in love, beginning with letting the Word speak to us first. Rating: 4.5 stars of 5. conrade This book is provided to me courtesy of Crossway Publishers and NetGalley in exchange for an honest review. All opinions offered above are mine unless otherwise stated or implied.

Few issues cause more handwringing among Christians in our day than that of homosexuality and same-sex marriage. For some, it's not a lack of clarity on what they believe, but about how to express it without being accused of being bigots. And so, many in this group, because they are uncertain of how to speak winsomely, say nothing. Others, the issue itself is extremely cloudy. They don't really know or aren't really sure what, if anything, the Bible says about the issue, and how to interpret what's there. So when they read the arguments of affirming or revisionist authors, they have no idea how to respond or what to think. And because they aren't grounded, they risk falling into serious error. You can see why pastor and author Kevin DeYoung would be compelled to write a book on the subject then, can't you? Which is why *What Does the Bible Really Teach About Homosexuality?* exists. In this book, he wants to bolster the faith of those who know what they believe, but are unsure of how to communicate. He wants to bring clarity to those for whom the situation seems murky. And he wants to challenge those who, flying under the banner of Christ, would seek to revise what the Bible really says about homosexuality. Divided into two parts, DeYoung begins by first examining the texts which directly speak to humanity's design and homosexual practice: Genesis 1-2, Genesis 19, Leviticus 18, 20, Romans 1, 1 Corinthians 6, and 1 Timothy 1. The inclusion of Genesis 1-2 might surprise some, since it is the creation account, but including it makes complete sense. After all, we can't truly understand what the Bible says about homosexuality without first understanding how God created human beings. For the Christian, there is nothing more basic than this: humans were created unique in all of creation • the man and the woman were made in the image and likeness of God. They were made to be something like him, as unity in diversity. And this is repeated referenced all throughout the Bible. It is the foundation and framework of marriage in Ephesians 5, and in Jesus' own teaching on divorce in Matthew 19:4-6. It is a picture of the gospel, and a type of the marriage that is to come in the new heavens and new earth (Revelation 19). Thus, DeYoung writes, "Marriage, by its very nature, requires complementarity. The mystical

union of Christ and the church. Each is a part belonging to the other but neither interchangeable in marital union without the differentiation of male and female. If God wanted us to conclude that men and women were interchangeable in the marriage relationship, he not only gave us the wrong creation narrative; he gave us the wrong metanarrative." (32) DeYoung's point here is pretty simple: how you view the male-female relationship is inevitably going to influence whether the validity of same-sex marriage is even a question in your mind. If you function, as some Christians do, within the complementarian framework of gender—that is, each gender is uniquely designed to perform separate, but complementary functions—honestly, you're probably not asking any questions about whether or not homosexual practice is compatible with Christian belief. In this framework, the two are not interchangeable, and therefore homosexual practice cannot be compatible with Christian belief. The conversation, therefore, shifts more toward answering the challenge winsomely. For the egalitarian, however, the challenge is significantly different. If you believe that gender distinctions fundamentally have no bearing on your role and responsibility, you're more than likely having to deal first with the compatibility issue. I don't say this to disparage those who do hold this viewpoint, but merely to show that what we believe about male-female relationships may have drastic affects on our starting point on this issue (and potentially our end point). Part two of the book focuses on answering the common objections to the historic orthodox view of homosexuality: the Bible's limited discussion of homosexuality in general; the cultural distance argument (that is, the kind of homosexuality the Bible talks about isn't the kind revisionists advocate the inclusion of); our lack of condemnation of sins such as gluttony and divorce outside of the biblically permissible reasons; the church being a safe place for broken people and sinners; being on the wrong side of history; the fairness of encouraging same-sex attracted Christians to commit to life-long celibacy; and love as the overriding attribute and characteristic of God. Each topic, as should be expected, is handled very carefully, though DeYoung is not afraid to be a little jabby in places. On this point, it's important to remember that DeYoung is not being hostile toward those who experience same-sex attraction, nor is he particularly hostile toward revisionist authors. What troubles him greatly—and shines through on every page of this book—is his overriding concern about the seemingly blind acceptance of false teaching in our midst, and the diminishment of the authority of Scripture as a result. This is especially

apparent when DeYoung writes on the fairness issue, countering the oft-cited “good fruit/bad fruit” claims of Matthew Vines and other authors who ask, “If embracing their sexuality were really a step away from God | why are so many Ecogay Christians spiritually flourishing? (116) In other words, how can it be wrong if it’s yielding “good fruit”? The problem, DeYoung argues, is that the definition of “good fruit” proposed is wrong. In revisionist writing, experience has a tendency to trump the what Scripture says. Thus, the good fruit is fulfillment, satisfaction or personal happiness. It is a feeling. This is necessary for us to remember in a culture driven by experience what we feel is not unimportant, but we cannot escape the fact that as fallen human beings with hearts and minds corrupted by sin, our feelings will lie to us. “The heart wants what the heart wants” is true enough; however, what the heart wants is not always what the heart needs. Tim Keller said it well in a recent conference message, when the heart wants something, the mind will find it reasonable and the emotions find desirable. Thus, we should probably be a little more clear about fruit is, biblically. Instead of a feeling, Matthew 7:21 reminds us, good fruit is obedience. One only bears fruit when doing the will of the Father. Thus, if one is doing something contrary to the will of God, it is bad fruit, regardless of what we feel. We must remember “there are no genuinely healthy trees apart from obedience to Christ and the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:16-24)” (118). As true as this is, and as beneficial as it is to be reminded of it, the reality is, as much as we might want them to, the revisionists aren’t likely to heed the warning DeYoung issues in this book. As I read the book, I kept thinking of how they might attempt to refute his claims. To be sure, those who hold the affirming position of same-sex relationships will almost certainly stand against it’s message, but those who do will be doing so on a shaky foundation. The place I could see those standing in opposition to this book’s message appealing to most readily is experience. Because DeYoung doesn’t deal with same-sex attraction personally, one could argue, he doesn’t have a basis for writing this book. It’s a desperate argument, and a poor one, but one could still attempt to make the case. However, we should always remember that experience does not trump the Bible. Experience, as I said earlier, doesn’t supersede truth. And one does not need firsthand experience of something to be able to speak intelligently about it. Do we really expect pastors to develop a porn addiction before they can speak out against it? Or get divorced? Or become a drunkard? And even if the argument were valid, one could just as easily point to Sam

Allberry's excellent book, *Is God anti-gay?*, which largely makes the same case as *What Does the Bible Really Teach about Homosexuality?*—but he does so as a man who experiences same-sex attraction. Nevertheless, no matter how winsomely communicated, and no matter how rigorously defended, revisionists will likely remain entrenched in their position, despite its intellectual and theological dishonesty. Whether they are uncertain of what to believe, or simply struggle to effectively communicate the truth, this book will be a great help to its readers. *What Does the Bible Really Teach about Homosexuality?* offers clarity on disputed texts, pastoral responses to the common arguments, and most importantly, an urgent plea for evangelicals to hold fast to the truth in the face of mounting pressure to compromise. Lord willing, we will all carefully consider what DeYoung has to say in this book.

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