

Introduction

“Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a disgrace to any people” (Proverbs 14:34).

There are many challenging issues facing us in our society. As Christians, we need to be aware of these issues, understand what the Bible teaches concerning them, know how to face them, and learn how we can respond to them in order to lead people to the truth.

Over the course of this study, we will discuss the following issues:

1. Abortion
2. Homosexuality
3. Transgenderism
4. Gender roles
5. Racism
6. Drug abuse
7. Atheism/humanism

8. Nationalism
9. Socialism
10. Technology
11. Social media
12. Busyness
13. Materialism

Sin has always infected human society and will always be around. While the specific sinful behaviors and attitudes may rise and fall in popularity, the responsibility that God's people have is the same. We need to take heed to the admonition given by Paul to the church in Philippi:

“Prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world, holding fast the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I will have reason to glory because I did not run in vain nor toil in vain” (Philippians 2:15-16).

As we go through this study, my hope is that we might become better prepared to be the lights that the Lord has called us to be so that we can help lead people out of sin and into the paths of righteousness.

1

Abortion

Abortion is the procedure through which the life of a child in the womb is deliberately terminated. In other words, when an abortion is performed, an unborn child (a human being) is intentionally killed.

Those who argue in favor of abortion defend the practice as a woman's "right to choose" (*yet in most cases, it is really about avoiding the consequences of other choices*). They contend that arguments or legislation against abortion are hostile toward women as they are to have a right to privacy (*yet privacy should not be used to justify sin*). They declare that they have authority over their own bodies (*yet they deny the unborn child authority over his/her own body*). They often (but not always) ignore or argue against the humanity of the unborn.

Side note: Many see abortion as a *political* issue since parties on the “left” and “right” have taken different positions on it. However, fundamentally, abortion is a *moral* issue. Therefore, we should not be hesitant as Christians or churches to boldly teach the truth about this issue.

Facts & Statistics

Abortion became legal throughout the United States with the *Roe v. Wade* decision by the Supreme Court in 1973. Since that time, over 60 million abortions have been carried out in the United States.¹

There were 41.9 million abortions worldwide in 2018.²

In 2015, over 91% of abortions in the United States were performed during the first 13 weeks of pregnancy.³ However, there are an increasing number of people who will argue for “partial birth abortion” even up to the day of birth.

¹ <http://www.numberofabortions.com>

² <https://www.faithwire.com/2019/01/02/leading-cause-of-death-in-2018-surpasses-cancer-addiction-and-its-not-even-close/>

³ https://www.cdc.gov/reproductivehealth/data_stats/abortion.htm

Basic Bible Principles Relating to This

God is the giver of life – When God created man in the beginning, He “*formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being*” (Genesis 2:7). However, this was not just about the first man; God gives life to all men. Paul pointed this out to the philosophers on Mars Hill: “*He Himself gives to all people life and breath and all things*” (Acts 17:25).

God creates life in the womb – The psalmist praised God for this fact: “*For You formed my inward parts; You wove me in my mother’s womb. I will give thanks to You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made...*” (Psalm 139:13-16). When God called Jeremiah to prophesy for Him, He said, “*Before I formed you in the womb I knew you...*” (Jeremiah 1:5). God knew each one of us before anyone else knew we existed.

Human beings are made in God’s image – In the beginning, “*God created man in His own image*” (Genesis 1:26-27). Because of this, human life was to be valued and defended (Genesis 9:6). James said we are not even to “*curse*” others – let alone kill them – because they “*have been made in the likeness of God*” (James 3:9).

There is no difference in the humanity or value between a baby in the womb and a baby outside of the womb – When Elizabeth was pregnant and met Mary, Luke recorded that “*the baby leaped in her womb*” (Luke 1:41). After Jesus was born, an angel told the shepherds that they would “*find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger*” (Luke 2:12). In both verses, the same Greek word (*brephos*) is used for the child *in the womb* and the child *out of the womb*. As far as human life is concerned, there was no difference between one born and one unborn.

Murder is wrong – After the flood, God condemned murder and prescribed the death penalty for anyone guilty of murdering one who was made in His image (Genesis 9:5-6). One of the Ten Commandments was, “*You shall not murder*” (Exodus 20:13). The law would go on to specify that this would even apply to the killing of a baby that was yet unborn (Exodus 21:22-25). However, this was not just a command for the Old Testament. Murder is also condemned under the new covenant (Romans 13:9; 1 Timothy 1:9-10).

Questions for Discussion

Be prepared to explain your answer using supporting Scriptures when possible.

1. Is abortion a basic right for women?
2. Is it proper to say that abortion is simply about a woman's "right to choose"?
3. Are there any cases in which abortion is acceptable? (Rape? Incest? Health of the baby? Safety of the mother? Financial situation of the mother/family?)

4. What alternatives are there for one who is contemplating abortion?

Bottom Line

Abortion is the active and deliberate taking of an innocent human life – one that has been made in the image of God. Therefore, abortion is wrong.

Additional thought...

The Viability of Life

Some argue in favor of abortion on the basis of *viability* – if the unborn child would be unable to survive long-term outside of the womb, they believe abortion ought to be permitted. However, this line of thinking opens the door to many unintended (?) conclusions, including the acceptability of infanticide and euthanasia. Yet we must remember that *all* human beings are made in God's image and are deserving of the love and support of their fellow-human beings, whether their life is "viable" or not.

2

Homosexuality

Homosexuality is a compound word that refers to the sexual relations between two people of the *same* sex (the Greek *homo* means *same*). This is in contrast with heterosexuality which involves two people of the *opposite* sex (the Greek *hetero* means *other* or *different*).

Those who argue in favor of homosexuality will often argue from the standpoint that those in these relationships “love” one another and since it is based upon love their behavior is not to be questioned; instead, it should be celebrated. Many who defend homosexuality claim that homosexuals are “born that way”; therefore, we cannot judge them. However, while the “born that way” argument is common, it is not as popular as it used to be. Why? First, it is simply not true. Second, it is too limiting. The argument was used initially to get more people to *accept* homosexuality. After it is more widely accepted, the argument can be dropped to get more people to *experiment* with homosexuality.

Facts & Statistics

Among the adult population in the United States, about 1.8% identify as bisexual and 1.7% identify as “gay” or lesbian.⁴

Homosexual activity puts one at a greater risk of sexually transmitted diseases. In 2017, approximately 70% of new HIV diagnoses were among “gay” and bisexual men.⁵

Same-sex “marriage” was first made legal in Massachusetts with the first same-sex couples receiving marriage licenses in 2004.⁶

Since the *Obergefell v. Hodges* Supreme Court decision in 2015, same-sex “marriage” has been legally recognized in all fifty states. As of 2017, there were approximately 547,000 same-sex couples who had “married” (legally, but not Biblically) in the United States.⁷

⁴ <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/06/13/5-key-findings-about-lgbt-americans/>

⁵ <https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/group/msm/>

⁶ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Goodridge_v._Department_of_Public_Health

⁷ <https://www.marketwatch.com/story/same-sex-couples-spend-1-billion-on-weddings-in-one-year-2016-06-23>

Side note: The broad acceptance of same-sex “marriage” in our society has helped make it clear that *civil laws* regarding marriage are distinct from God’s marriage law. This means that just because the civil law classifies someone as married or unmarried does not mean that God is obligated to recognize him/her the same way.

Basic Bible Principles Relating to This

God created male and female to complement one another, including sexually – After creating Adam, God recognized, “*It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him*” (Genesis 2:18). When God brought all of the animals He created to Adam to receive a name, none of them would fit the need that man had (Genesis 2:19-20). So God created a woman to be the companion that Adam needed. They were literally made for one another. This included the “*one flesh*” sexual relationship (Genesis 2:24-25).

God designed marriage to be between one man and one woman – God bringing together Adam and Eve was meant to illustrate God’s law concerning marriage: “*For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh*” (Genesis 2:24). Jesus cited this law as the foundational principle for His teaching about mar-

riage as well, adding, “*What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate*” (Matthew 19:4-6). In other words, God’s design for marriage included *one* man and *one* woman for life.

Sexual activity outside of this relationship (fornication) is sinful – The Hebrew writer said, “*Marriage is to be held in honor among all, and the marriage bed is to be undefiled; for fornicators and adulterers God will judge*” (Hebrews 13:4). Fornication is the general term for any type of sexual immorality – including, but not limited to, homosexuality.

Homosexuality has been condemned by God in every dispensation – Before the Law of Moses was given, during the time of the patriarchs, Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed because they were given over to the sin of homosexuality (Genesis 19:4-13, 23-25; Jude 7). When the Law of Moses was given, homosexuality was explicitly condemned (Leviticus 18:22; 20:13).

Side note: Some have tried to explain away the destruction of Sodom as an example of God condemning homosexuality by claiming that they were punished for being *inhospitable* to visitors. They certainly were this, but they were specifically condemned because they “*indulged in gross immorality and went after strange flesh*” (Jude 7) – a reference to their homosexual behavior.

Even in the New Testament, homosexuality was classified as sinful behavior (1 Corinthians 6:9-11; 1 Timothy 1:10).

Besides being sinful, homosexuality is contrary to nature – Paul made this point in his letter to the saints in Rome: *“For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural, and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error”* (Romans 1:26-27). Because of this, one’s way of thinking must be fundamentally altered in order to desire to engage in this behavior.

Questions for Discussion

Be prepared to explain your answer using supporting Scriptures when possible.

1. Does the Bible condemn all homosexual behavior or are there other factors to consider?

Bottom Line

Homosexuality is one of many forms of fornication – sexual activity outside of the bounds of marriage – that is also contrary to nature. The Bible clearly classifies this behavior as sinful; therefore, homosexuality is wrong no matter how much public opinion changes about it.

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