

A Brief Biblical Response: Where Matthew Vines Has Got It Wrong

By Presbyterian AFFIRM

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Matthew Vines's book *God And The Gay Christian* has been summarised in a one-page "A Brief Biblical Case", using the ten headings below. If you have seen that (or the book) please consider our responses to Vine's ten headings. Because Christians need to discern what God has actually said, rather than be persuaded just by human opinions, we encourage you to consult the scripture passages referenced.

- 1. "Condemning same-sex relationships is harmful to LGBT people."** Hating people is not a Christ-like response. But neither is avoiding the truth. The Bible consistently teaches that homosexual acts are sinful (e.g. Rom 1:24-28). Practising homosexuals are among those who will not enter the Kingdom of God (1 Cor 6:9-10). Not caring about people's salvation is infinitely more harmful than speaking the truth in love (Eph 4:15). People caught in any sin need to experience Christ's grace and to turn away from sin (John 8:10).
- 2. "Sexual orientation is a new concept, one the Christian tradition hasn't addressed."** Clearly the biblical writers, and Greco/Roman culture, were familiar with people being drawn to their own sex. Nevertheless, the Bible talks about the homosexual behaviour. Orientation or not, the act is wrong in God's sight. We are all oriented towards certain sins. That doesn't make the sin right.
- 3. "Celibacy is a gift, not a mandate."** God created sex as an act between a married couple (male and female). He requires celibacy from all where that condition is not met. This is not a unique requirement on homosexuals. It is entirely consistent with biblical teaching. God enables those who are called to celibacy. God's enabling is the gift and it is equally available to Christians with a same-sex orientation.
- 4. "Sodom and Gomorrah involved an attempted gang rape, not a loving relationship."** The sins of Sodom and Gomorrah were broader than just homosexuality and the passage does describe gang rape. However, it was the homosexual behaviour that Lot described as "wicked" and tried to prevent (Gen 19). Jude 7 refers to Sodom's "unnatural desire" (ESV) or "perversion" (NIV). It is not the violence that is condemned (although that is shocking) but the perverted nature of the sexuality. See also 2 Peter 2:6-10.
- 5. "The prohibitions in Leviticus don't apply to Christians."** Homosexual acts are consistently condemned throughout the Bible (e.g. Romans 1: 18-32, 1 Cor 6:10) not in Leviticus only. Leviticus however is still relevant to Christians: while its dietary and ceremonial law (which established Israel's distinctiveness from the other nations) no longer apply, the ethical teachings of Leviticus (and all of its sexual prohibitions, including 18:22 and 20:13) still remain in force. If not, we would have to conclude that God's prohibition on bestiality also no longer applies to Christians.
- 6. "Paul condemns same-sex lust, not love."** There is no evidence for that claim. Romans 1 etc. condemn the act, not the attitude behind it. According to the scriptures, all homosexual acts are sinful.
- 7. "The term 'homosexual' didn't exist until 1892."** So what? "Homosexual" is the way we now describe same-sex intimate behaviour and the Bible consistently says that it is sinful.
- 8. "Marriage is about commitment."** God created us male and female (Gen 1:27) and He designed marriage as a relationship between a man and a woman (Gen 2:14). Jesus and Paul reaffirmed this (Matt 19:4-6; Eph 5:31-32). Re-defining marriage as about just 'commitment' distorts God's design and intention.
- 9. "Human beings are relational."** True but relationships do not require sex and not all kinds of sexual relationships are healthy. People (including homosexuals) can have deeply satisfying, non-sexual friendships. Despite our society's preoccupation with it, sex outside of marriage is not a right. Nor is sex essential to happiness. The insistence on sexual freedom is not biblical or Christian.
- 10. "Faithful Christians are already embracing LGBT brothers and sisters."** Christians should absolutely love those who are LGBT. However, condoning their behaviour cannot be called "faithful" when it conflicts with what God has clearly said. The fact that some Christians have become confused on this issue is a tragic reality, but not something to be proud of, or to imitate. As stated above, Christian faithfulness requires both genuine love of others *and* true fidelity to God's truth as revealed in His word.