

## 6. 1 Cor 6.9 & 1 Tim 1.9-10

**Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality (1 Cor 6.9); the law is not laid down for the just but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who strike their fathers and mothers, for murderers,<sup>10</sup> the sexually immoral, men who practice homosexuality, enslavers, liars, perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine (1 Tim 1.9-10).**

### Introduction

In both texts, Paul speaks of various sins of a general category and he particularizes: **the sexually immoral** have types including **adulterers** and **men who practice homosexuality** (Cor); **the sexually immoral** and, **men who practice homosexuality** (Tim). He does this with lawless then murderers, the disobedient with those who strike their fathers and mothers, and **liars** with **perjurers** (Tim). The lists are neither symmetrical nor exhaustive but selective regarding things generally then specifically. Thus, adultery (sex of a married person with someone other than a spouse) and homosexuality (same-sex sex between males) are examples of sexual immorality (as are all transgressions of marital intimacy: bestiality, incest, etc).

### I. How can we state the relevance of these texts to those who practice same-sex sin?

Same-sex sins are included in the category of the sexually immoral in both texts.

1 Cor 6.9: **the sexually immoral**

1 Tim 1.10: **the sexually immoral**

As we have seen, homosexuals transgress the boundaries of marriage defined in Genesis 1-2; this definition is confirmed by Jesus in Mark 10 as a bond of sexual intimacy for life of two people, one male and one female. In the sin of homosexuality, per Romans 1.26-27, the parties act contrary to God's special and natural revelation whether male or female and the conduct is morally impure, unrighteous, ungodly, dishonorable, and worthy of death.

Likewise, as we have demonstrated, Leviticus shows how all forms of incest, homosexuality, and bestiality along with adultery (in the narrow sense) are breeches of the seventh commandment to not commit adultery (in the broad sense).

Similarly, in Hebrews 13.4, not keeping the marriage bed free of defilement occurs by sexual sin committed by a married person (adultery in narrow sense), and also by any kind of sexual immorality: **Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous.** Marriage is the norm, the mark missed by homosexual sin, and the boundary crossed by this transgression.

Thus, "sexually immoral" refers to all types of sexual sin (and all their sub-types). For example, adultery may be committed by a husband, a wife, and by the third party, If the third party is not a married person, he or she still commits adultery. Thus, "You shall not commit adultery" includes acts that transgress marriage by married or unmarried persons and it includes sinful desire, committing adultery in the heart, as Jesus taught in the Sermon on the Mount. Therefore, those who have same-sex sex in the heart as well as in the body are sexually immoral people who fall within the scope of reference in both 1 Corinthians and 1 Timothy.

### II. What can be said about a narrow meaning for **men who practice homosexuality**?

The word translated "men who practice homosexuality" or "homosexuals" is only used here in the Bible. Another rare word is subsumed by the ESV in the phrase "men who practice homosexuality," but is translated distinctly in the KJV: **nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with**

**mankind** [i.e. men with men] (1 Cor 6.9). The ESV translators refer to both parties in the sexual relationship in the single phrase “men who practice homosexuality” (whichever one has the role of likeness to a woman and no matter how the roles may alternate, both practice homosexuality). The KJV translators distinguish the roles in a way that corresponds with the fact that though the roles may alternate there is a man where their ought to be a wife.

In “gay exegesis” these terms in Corinthians and Timothy are defined in ways that allow for good forms of homosexuality. They do so by defending the claim that the words have a narrow sense that does not apply to modern loving and moderate gay relationships. They claim that these relationships are not cited by Paul and Scripture nowhere condemns them. In this view, Paul only condemns some form of excess, abuse, male prostitution, or pederasty (an erotic relationship between males, one an adolescent and the other an adult that was common in Greek culture where it had idealized, loving, and acceptable forms as well as abusive forms). They move in the direction of excess by comparison with drunkenness in the text, of male prostitution by reference in the text to idolatry, and of pederasty from “effeminate.” These are superficial connections. The problem for all interpreters is that both passages are lists that are selective and the relevant words (effeminate male and literally, “male sex”) are difficult to define.

#### A. Effeminate male

This is a common word in classical Greek (400 years before Paul) for the “feminine” male partner. It referred both to the idealized loving relationship of an adult and a minor and to abusive forms of pederasty. Plato’s *Symposium* contains every form of homosexuality that exists in our modern culture (James De Young, *The Source and NT Meaning of Ἀρσενικοῖται*, with Implications for Christian Ethics and Ministry, *MSJ* 3:2, Fall 92, 205-206: “In summary, virtually every element in the modern discussion of love and homosexuality is anticipated in the *Symposium* of Plato”). The word is not found with sexual connotation in the Greek OT or in the literature from roughly 400 BC to Paul’s day but homosexual conduct is pictured in art of this time that shows a man in the female role and uses other Greek terms for the passive and active partners. Contemporary with Paul, this word reoccurs with vivid descriptions (not just in lists) to describe men who even dress like women as part of same-sex sex (Robert Gagnon, *The Bible and Homosexual Practice: Texts and Hermeneutics*, 303-312; Donald Wold, *Out of Order: Homosexuality in the Bible and the Ancient Near East*, 191-192).

Thus, Paul uses a masculine noun to itemize a form of sexual immorality in which a man is soft or unmanly in some way. In the context of classical Greek and contemporary use, it is reasonable to understand him to be referring to the passive homosexual partner. Moreover, because Paul identifies the conduct as sinful and does not qualify it, then all expressions of this aspect of homosexuality fall under his title of the sexually immoral, whether as part of a willing loving bond or a commercial transaction with the effeminate as a male prostitute. Without qualification, the term is sufficiently broad and inclusive of any males who function to any extent in the woman’s role sexually. It is a variation of homosexuality with accent on the replacement role, whichever one has the role of likeness to a woman and no matter how the roles may alternate, both practice homosexual sin and are sexually immoral.

#### B. Male sex (literal translation of the second relevant word)