

7. Deep-rooted Homosexuality and the Power of Grace

Introduction

The previous section of our study (on 1 Cor 6.9-11) opened the door to application. Now we need some perspective on how we should understand the deep-rootedness of homosexuality as a platform for understanding the workings of God's grace. Let us consider 1) views in the culture and in the church, 2) homosexuality [the sin of same-sex sex] as a subset of human (total) depravity and moral responsibility, 3) the break with sin by grace, and 4) the sovereignty of the Spirit in progressive spiritual renewal (perhaps, this might best unfold to a fifth section on application *with emphasis on our responsibility in the context of spiritual renewal by the Spirit*). This will take us to the time of the ETS presentation and the end of this series.

7.1 Views of deep-rootedness in the culture and in the church

Of course, to understand the power of grace, we must understand the deep roots of sin. For a step in that direction, we have a study by a committee of the RPCNA to help us along (*The Gospel and Sexual Orientation, a Testimony of the RPCNA*, Crown & Covenant, 2012, M. Lefebvre, editor; I will refer to this book [67 pages] as RPS, the Reformed Presbyterian Study).

A. Cultural development

Until 1973, homosexuality was classified in the America Psychiatric Association's manual of mental disorders as a pathology (mental, social abnormality or malfunction). However, studies of homosexual men and women revealed that this notion was wrong because these people were found to be well-adapted mentally and socially (RPS 10). Thus, psychiatry succeeded in showing what homosexuality is not. So, study shifted to biology and the search for a "gay gene." Now, after decades of research, much remains unclear and the conclusions are "not definitive," but there is merit to the general belief that homosexuality is a result of a mixture of nature (genetics or *in utero* chemistry) and nurture (childhood development).

B. Church perspective

The RPS states that we should view the insights of science in a balanced way.

1. Cautiously welcome the science (RPS 11-12)

We are not to be dismissive of this science because there is "much evidence that favors the conclusion that same-sex desires emerge from factors deeper in the person than his or her own, personal choices" (11). Still, there are two reasons to exercise a measured degree of skepticism.

a. Most of the relevant science presupposes a materialistic view of human nature

From the start, research is governed by a materialistic worldview in which man is a soulless creature and for whom all behavior "must" have a physiological cause. However, the physicalist worldview is ill-grounded with its vision of a world with no mind in which all thought is reduced to what we eat and secrete; it denies human in human nature and reduces not only all moral thoughts to meaninglessness but all thoughts, even the thought that physicalism is true reduced to meaninglessness. Also, science is in constant flux and it is possible that eventually the quest for the gay gene may reveal itself to be an earnest effort to travel down a dead end road (18).

b. Largely, the quest for the gay gene is subjectively and politically motivated

Great pressure drives the science. For example, the APA dropped the pathology classification in 1973 because of disruptive demonstrations and threats of gay activists (the evidence indicates that a majority of members favored not dropping the classification at that time, 12). This makes it difficult to know what studies to trust or not trust.

2. Willingly engage the science (13)

Do so as able. Science gives us facts; scientists have the tools that we lack, but we can interpret the facts meaningfully. We are not bound to scientific authorities for interpretation, as we saw with Coyne, scientists may be poor interpreters.

3. Allow the possibility that a “gay gene” may be found in the future

This does seem unlikely in the present state of the science. The important fact is this: finding a genetic cause would not alter biblical teaching (13-15); just as finding a zoophilia gene would not make bestiality morally acceptable (Hani Miletski posits biological sources for an inborn orientation toward bestiality, *Understanding Bestiality & Zoophilia*, 2002).

The discovery of a genetic cause would not warrant a change in the biblical doctrine of man (13), even though many churchmen think so, i.e. Burr (God made gay people this way) and Via (homosexuality is a different sexual order of creation), as if homosexuality (qualified as some good form of it versus bad forms) is part of God’s natural order. The basis is that since there is a natural cause then the desire and practice is natural. RPS does not refer to the Metropolitan Community Church (MCC), but we can add it here because it is a professing Christian denomination that presupposes the innate quality of homosexuality and therefore its acceptance for the Christian life, church membership, and Christian ministry.

The RPS emphasizes that discovery of a cause (for which there is much evidence albeit still inconclusive evidence) would not lead to the conclusion that homosexuality is a part of God’s natural order (14) because of the scriptural teaching regarding the disorder of things introduced by the fall that requires sanctifying renewal by the Spirit. They cite the *WCF* on what the Bible teaches about the effects of original sin upon human nature (14): Adam and the human family became “dead in sin, and wholly defiled in all the parts and faculties of soul and body” with a “corrupted nature” (6.2-3). Therefore, sexual identity is included in all the parts and faculties of soul and body which have been disordered by original sin (14). By contrast, the natural, proper, original order is defined in Genesis 1-2 as involving two genders, sexually designed for one another. Other orientations of sexuality (polygamy, adultery, same-sex sex) are corruptions of this one-man-and-one-woman creation order (14-15).

RPS lesson: “If science shows us that sexual disorders are more deeply enmeshed in human biology than the church has traditionally understood, [say, by “conclusiveness” on a gay gene] this ought to stir our concern for even greater understanding and compassion for those who experience these desires; however, it does not change the fact that such inclinations are contrary to human nature as God designed it-and as he is redeeming it” (15).