

Helping the Homosexual Over the Rainbow



Sonny Childs

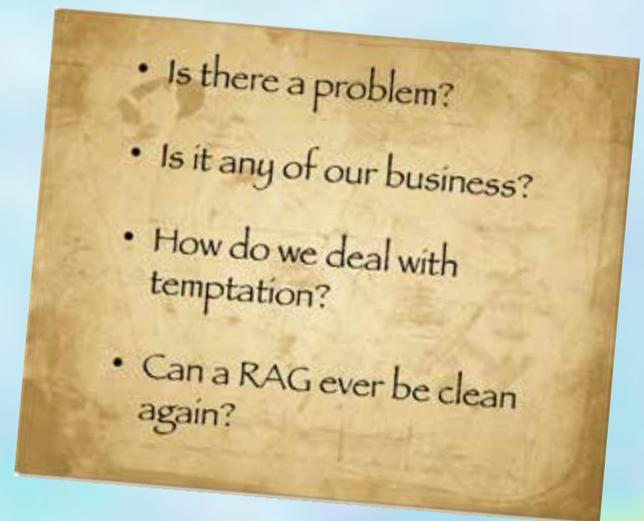
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Helping the Homosexual

Over the Rainbow



Introduction:

Genesis 9:12-13 (NKJV)

“And God said: This is the sign of the covenant which I make between Me and you, and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations: 13 I set My rainbow in the cloud, and it shall be for the sign of the covenant between Me and the earth.”

For thousands of years that Divine message has visited the skies to remind us of God’s faithfulness. He is good!

But may we never forget that the rainbow is also a reminder of God’s justice. It was only after a world-wide cleansing that His righteous nature was satisfied and this message of promise was provided. Before getting lost in the beautiful colors of the rainbow, read again the description of man’s condition just before its first appearance in the heavens.

Genesis 6:5-7 (NKJV)

“Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. 6 And the Lord was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. 7 So the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, creeping thing and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them.”

Today, those sad conditions are being duplicated again all across this planet. In a sad twist of irony, the rainbow, which has represented God and His values for thousands of years, is now being used to represent many of the very things that brought about Earth’s first cleansing.

In San Francisco, California during the late 1970’s, God’s symbol for Divine faithfulness was adopted by the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community to represent their diverse lifestyles of sin. In a total affront to God’s most basic values they took the purity



of His heavenly message and turned it into another one of man's most bold blasphemies.

To the Christian community, the rainbow is a symbol of God's covenant with man. It represents peace and unity with the Creator, based upon our surrender to HIS passions. The rainbow not only reminds us of God's faithfulness and just nature, it also points us toward our personal journey over the rainbow and into His presence. It is for that journey that this book was written.

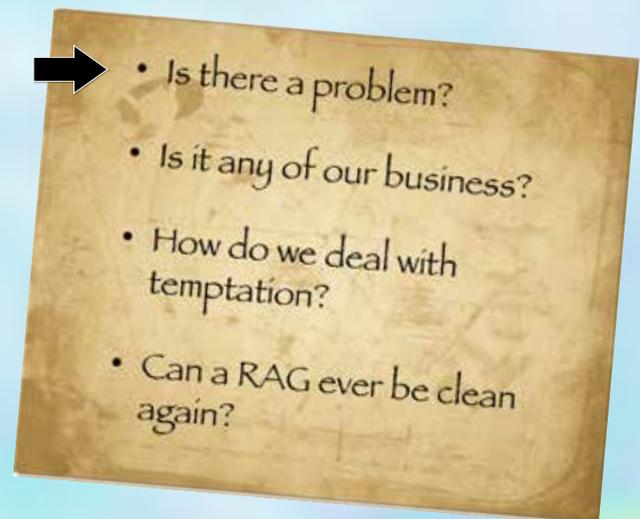
Until God calls us beyond the rainbow, it is our job to lovingly pursue all those who have forgotten the One Who placed the rainbow in the sky. It is our job to speak the truth no matter what it costs and love the person no matter how they respond. We must always remember, the message does not belong to us. The decision to be intolerant toward sin is not our decision. In order to properly honor the holy God of the rainbow, we have no choice but to echo the values of His divine nature. We must communicate the judgment of The Judge.

Acts 4:19 (NIV)

“As for us, we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard.”

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Is there a problem?

Before a study on “Helping The Homosexual” can have any real value, it first must be established that there is a problem. In recent years, thousands have “come out of the closet” to proudly acknowledge their “alternative life-style”. Numerous laws have been passed to promote and protect their sexual freedoms. In today’s climate, to speak against the homosexual life-style is not only politically incorrect but in some cases even illegal. Because this movement is growing in popularity, shouldn’t the church keep up with the times, relax its rules and embrace it as well? Is there a problem?

Many today view the Bible as an outdated standard of living that was designed to keep humanity from the things that would bring them pleasure. Throughout the ages, God has repeatedly proven that just the opposite is actually the case.

An ancient command, given by God thousands of years before medical science discovered its value, involved separating the sick from the healthy. In Leviticus 13:46, God commanded that the sick be put in an area of isolation to keep their germs from spreading to the healthy. Undoubtedly, many did not understand the need for this command and probably mocked the practice as just another way for God to inflict hardship on humanity. Today, however, quarantine is commonly practiced in the medical field and God’s law has been shown once again to bring good health and happiness, not hardship and misery.

Perhaps the greatest application from the numerous illustrations of God’s timeless wisdom is that, even though we do not understand why God has forbidden some things, we can be certain that He has done it for our own good. Very likely, the ancient Jews did not completely understand all of the reasons for quarantine and many of the other laws of cleanliness. Yet, when they obeyed His directives by faith, they were a healthier and happier people. When they disobeyed, disease and tragedy followed.

God has also given us specific laws to govern sexuality. Many today, like thousands of people in the past, are mocking these standards calling them “outdated”, “obselete” and “just another way for



religion to ruin life's pleasures". They say, "It's your body. If it feels good, do it!"

But what are the results?! Given the number of cureless sexually transmitted diseases in today's world, promiscuous sex probably could be considered suicidal. Experts tell us that America still has the highest teenage pregnancy rate among all developed countries. Every year over one million teenage girls become pregnant. Many of these pregnancies occur not because they want to start a family, but because they are listening to the mockery being made of God's sexual standards.

God does not give bad laws. He knows that sexual perversion promotes disease and emotional distress. Because of this, He commands His people to seek out one sexual partner (Genesis 2:24) and be committed to them both physically and emotionally for as long as they both shall live. Only God's version of "safe sex" is really safe sex.

Now to the point. God's laws do not just regulate heterosexual relationships, He has also given laws forbidding all forms of homosexuality. Out of faith in God's flawless record to always do what is best for His creation, we ought to accept this regulation even if we do not understand it.

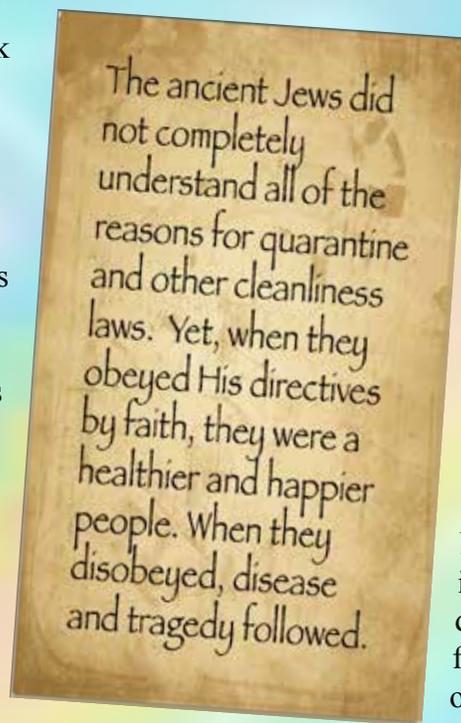
However, understanding the reason for God's regulation against homosexuality is not that difficult. The purpose can be easily seen in the Creator's design. God was very specific when He created man and woman and He expects all humanity to respect His creative choices. Homosexuality is an obvious violation of this godly design and an unnatural use of God's creation.

In Romans 1:27 (NIV), the Holy Spirit of God inspired the following words, "In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion." Here God clearly condemns homosexuality because it is unnatural. Consider the following common sense conclusions:

1. Homosexuality is unnatural because, in order to experience intercourse, homosexual partners must use body parts in ways they were simply not designed to be used. In many cases homosexual practices are not only unnatural but also unhealthy. This obviously suggests it is going against design. One does not have to be an expert in anatomy to marvel at the way the male and female bodies were Divinely designed to match one another. Homosexuality is like forcing a puzzle piece into a wrong slot. It was not designed to fit there and forcing it only creates more problems.

2. Perhaps the most compelling evidence to suggest that this practice is unnatural is that homosexuality has no natural reproductive potential. One of the earliest commands given by God was to "be fruitful and to increase in number". (Genesis 1:28, NIV) The homosexual relationship cannot in itself obey this command. Homosexuality defeats God's plan and sets His pattern for the family on its ear. God has from the beginning of time, used the physical family to define the spiritual family. Homosexuality cripples that Divine illustration.

3. Homosexuality is unnatural because it is often the result of "extreme living". Many engage in this practice because they have experienced all other perversions and are looking for one more "living on the edge" experience. Others have been submitted to extreme sexual abuse which created within them a spiritual sickness much like an addiction.



We live in a world that is out of control. Our society seems to be involved in a constant search of the ultimate thrill. From bungee jumping to drug abuse, we continue to push the limits of moderation. God says to be self-controlled (II Peter 1:6) and to be moderate in all that we do. The world may call it “narrow-minded” or “outdated” but God’s instructions have always been right in the past. In spite of the world’s laughter, wisdom demands that we follow God’s command to avoid “extreme living”.

4. Homosexuality is unnatural because it creates confusion for children who are brought into such settings. If children from a single parent home have difficulty adjusting, how much more difficult must it be for children in a home with two mothers and no fathers or two fathers and no mothers? God designed the home to contain one mother and one father because each of the sexes have unique qualities to offer in a child’s development.

Despite the women’s liberation movement, and other movements like it, men and women are still uniquely different and children still require the influence of both genders to develop properly. In homes absent of a mother or father, statistics are staggering to prove that childhood development is often much more difficult than in homes containing both a paternal and maternal influence. The opposite must also be true. In homes absent one gender, yet offering a double dose of the other gender, confusion among the children must be overwhelming. Because homosexuals are now dominating the media and the agenda of the liberal left, the future will undoubtedly present an entire field of new psychological problems that must be treated.

5. Homosexuality is unnatural because of the feelings of guilt. The world will argue that

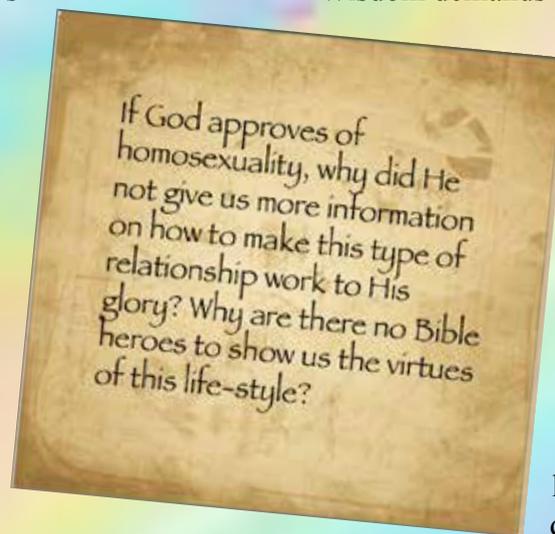
these feelings of guilt come from the conservative standards of society and, to some extent, they are correct. But these feelings also come from an in-born set of standards which help us determine what is natural. When we violate these standards, our conscience hurts. This sends a danger signal to our logic that something is wrong and a change is then expected. When change does not come and repeated violations of the conscience occurs, callousness results and the person loses moral feeling in that area. When this happens, the act seems natural to the calloused heart, even though in reality it is still an unnatural one. The moral wrongfulness has not changed, the person has simply lost their ability to feel that it is wrong.

Even if, after reading all five of these common sense arguments, you still do not understand why God condemns homosexuality, you do know that God has proven Himself to be faithful in the past. Wisdom demands that you trust His judgment on this issue in spite of our lingering questions.

Conclusion:

Although I do not believe in using sarcastic phrases to belittle those who have opposing views, the observation that “God made Adam and Eve not Adam and Steve” does merit some consideration. If the Bible has been misinterpreted and God does approve of homosexuality as so many claim, why did He

place a man and a woman in the Garden? Why are there no Bible heroes to show us the virtues of this life-style? If God approves of homosexuality, why did He not give us more information on how to make this type of relationship work to His glory? Scripture is filled with advice for heterosexual couples; Genesis 2, the Song of Solomon, I Corinthians 7, Ephesians 5, Colossians 3, etc. Why is God so silent about His support for the homosexual life-style? Homosexuality is wrong because it robs

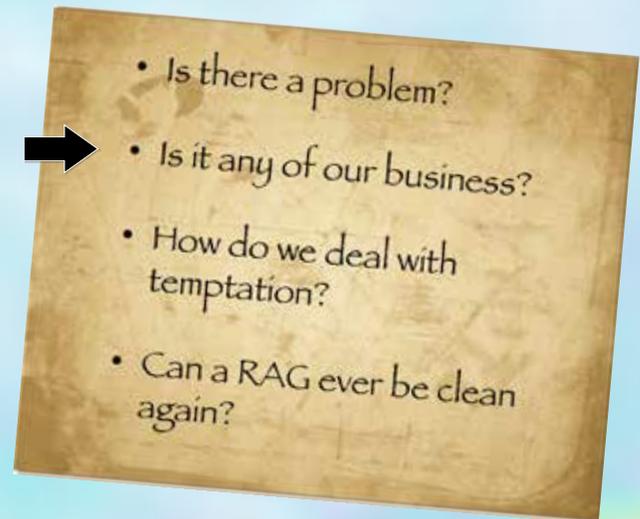


God of His greatest illustration of the spirit realm - the physical family. It is a perversion of His plan to educate us about the world to come. It runs counterproductive to His goals and it destroys the family unit both physically and spiritually.

Is there a prolem? Yes. Homosexuality is an unnatural perversion of God's holy design. And, as we will see in the next section, those who choose to ignore God's clear directives will not only bring suffering upon themselves but also upon their family and friends.

Helping the Homosexual

Over the Rainbow



Is it any of our business?

Before moving on, we really must ask ourselves another important question, “Even if homosexuality is wrong, is it any of our business what consenting adults do behind closed doors?”

In the last section, we noted several common sense reasons why homosexuality is unnatural. Among those conclusions we can also find several homosexual side effects that clearly impact more than just those “behind closed doors”:

1. Homosexuality promotes the use of body parts in ways for which they were not designed. If healthcare is a shared responsibility of our society, then all abuses of the body, including homosexuality, should be deemed a social concern.
2. Homosexuality creates confusion for children who are brought into such settings. God designed the home to contain one mother and one father because each of the sexes have unique qualities to offer in a child’s development. In homes absent a healthy father and mother role-modeling team, statistics are staggering to prove that childhood development is much more difficult. Confusion among the children must be overwhelming. The social problems born of this confusion are not a private matter. We all suffer the results.
3. Homosexuality promotes guilt. It revolts against the inborn nature of the Creator and it taunts God to remove His blessing from all those who practice or approve of such behavior.

The consequences that come from a life of homosexuality are many and far reaching. In I Corinthians 6:9 (NIV) God explicitly records, “Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders...” Obviously, one must conclude from this passage that unrepentant homosexuality is punishable by separation from God’s kingdom.

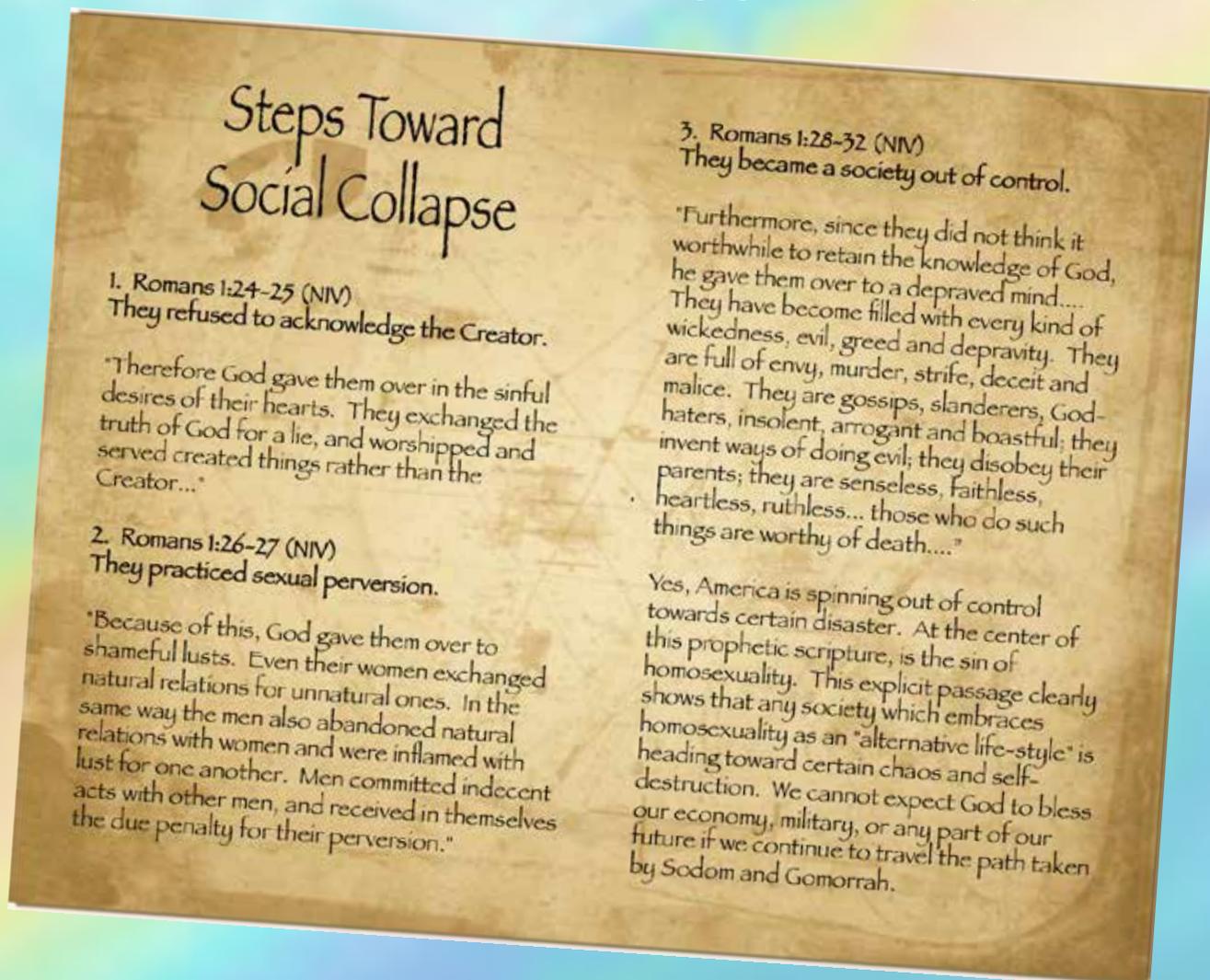


Many liberal churches have ignored this passage and have caved under social pressures to accept unrepentant homosexuals into their membership and even into their pulpits. Yet, it matters not what man says. Unrepentant homosexuals cannot be part of God's kingdom. God's own words have forbidden it.

In the Old Testament, homosexuality is listed right along with incest and sex with animals. It was punishable by death. Today God does not command the death penalty, but no doubt He is still repulsed by this practice. (Romans 1:32) Clearly one can see, from these and other passages, that individuals who practice such sexual perversion cannot expect to be pleasing to God nor enter into His kingdom.

Contrary to the opinions of those who claim that homosexuality is a private, personal choice of an "alternative life-style", the consequences and impact of such practices reach far beyond the individual. What does happen to a society that endorses homosexuality as an "alternative life-style"? What is God's judgment towards them? In Genesis 19, we find perhaps the most famous story about homosexuality and God's swift punishment. Because of this and other perversions, God "rained down burning sulfur on Sodom and Gomorrah" wiping the cities and their sins off the face of the earth.

In Romans 1:18-32, we find the description of another society that left God and involved itself in homosexual perversions. Notice the unmistakable pattern and similarities between these people and the people of America today. (See the chart.)



Romans 1:18-32 lists three steps this ancient culture took on its way to social collapse. Is the American culture any different?

1. Verses 18-25 record that they refused to acknowledge God in spite of the obvious design that can be “clearly seen” (vs 20) through His creation. God, therefore, “gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts” (vs 24), because they “worshipped and served created things rather than the Creator.” (vs 25)

AMERICAN PARALLEL - In the early 60’s, America refused to acknowledge God as Creator despite the “clearly seen” (vs 20) evidence of His design. We then replaced the reading of the Bible in our schools with the study of evolution. In so doing, we “worshipped and served created things rather than the Creator.” (vs 25)

2. Verses 26-27 record that they engaged in “shameful lusts” and the women “exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion.”

AMERICAN PARALLEL- During the 60’s and 70’s, America experienced a “sexual revolution” that rivals the perversion of Sodom and Gomorrah and the Dark Ages. Premarital sex and fornication were rampant and homosexuals began “coming out of the closet” to publicly display their exchange of “natural relations for unnatural ones”. (vs 26)

3. Verses 28-31 record that God “gave them over to a depraved mind”. (vs 28) This depraved mind led them into “every kind of wickedness, evil,

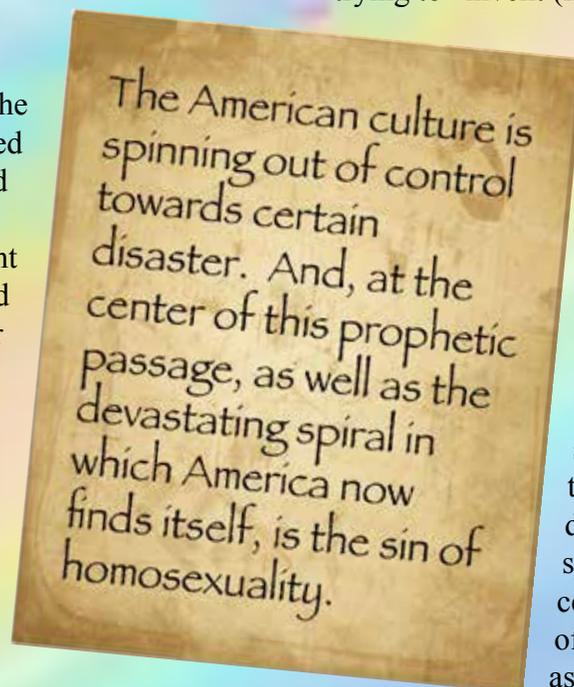
greed...envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice”. (vs 29) They became “gossips, slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant, and boastful” and they invented “ways of doing evil”, disobeyed their parents and became “senseless, faithless, heartless, (and) ruthless”. (vs 29-31) They were a society out of control.

AMERICAN PARALLEL - One need not look very far to see the sad parallel between these words and the American society. These descriptions could easily be mistaken for today’s headlines. With regularity, we hear of “depraved” individuals entering public buildings and opening fire on innocent victims, or we see news footage of bones being removed from the back yard of a serial killer. “Slander” has become a way of life for the publishers of “gossip” and “deceit”-filled tabloids. “Greed” has a stranglehold on sports and everyday business dealings. Entertainment producers spend their day trying to “invent (new) ways of doing evil” so they

will have another shocking sequence with which to draw the public into their theaters. “God-haters” are growing in number and heinous crimes committed by Satan’s minions are reported every day. Yes, America is operating with a “depraved mind”!

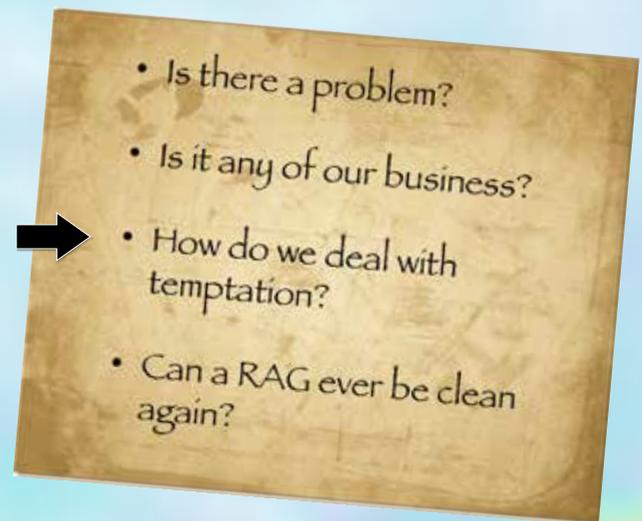
Yes, it is our business. Homosexuality reaches far beyond those who are “behind closed doors.” The American culture is spinning out of control toward certain disaster. And, at the center of this prophetic passage, as well as the devastating spiral in which America now finds itself, is the sin

of homosexuality. Clearly one can see, from this explicit passage, that any society that embraces homosexuality as an “alternative life-style” is heading toward certain chaos and destruction. We cannot expect God to bless our future if we continue on the path of Sodom and Gomorrah.



Helping the Homosexual

Over the Rainbow



How do we deal with temptation?

In the first section we saw that, unless a person acknowledges homosexuality as a sin, there will be no desire to look for solutions. In the second section, God revealed the social consequences connected with acceptance of this “unnatural” life-style. In this section, we will see that no temptation can fully be overcome without the help of Jesus.

Until a person acknowledges the problem, is broken before God, and accepts the Lord’s unconditional authority, he cannot find lasting peace or escape from the temptations of homosexuality. On the other hand, once a person has entered into full submission, God has promised that “he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear.” (I Corinthians 10:13, NIV)

The key to effectively dealing with the temptation of homosexuality can be found in the acronym **A.L.L.** God asks you to do A.L.L. that you can do. A is for **ask**, L is for **look** and L is for **leave**.

A is for Ask

A little boy was given his first real money-making opportunity. A neighbor had offered him ten dollars to move a wood pile across the yard. Curious, and a little concerned, the boy’s father repeatedly peeked out the side window to check on his son’s progress.

Late that afternoon an exhausted, dirt-covered seven-year-old collapsed on the living room floor. “Dad, I tried” said the boy with a tone of disappointment, “I tried, but I just couldn’t get it all done. I’m sorry. I know you want me to finish a job when I start one, but I just can’t do anymore. I’m sorry. I’ve done all I could.”

The father walked over, lifted the tired young man into his arm and held him close for a long moment. “No Son, you didn’t do everything you could. You didn’t ask me for help.”



God wants and expects us to let Him help with this difficult problem. In I Corinthians 10:13 He gave us this wonderful promise, "...God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it." (NIV)

Those struggling with the temptation of homosexuality should ask their loving heavenly Father to provide two things:

First, strength to "stand up under it". In Philippians 2:13 Paul says, "...it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose." (NIV) God is the power that works within you. He will provide you with the power to act His way. Spend much time in prayer. It is your link to the power.

Secondly, ask God to run ahead of you and clear the path of temptation. In Matthew 6:13 Jesus told us to pray to the Father in this way, "And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one." (NIV) God does not tempt us with evil (James 1:13), but He does on occasion allow Satan to tempt us in order to build our faith. Ask God to build your faith but to protect you from any temptation that Satan might use to defeat you.

L is for Look

The second step to effectively dealing with the temptation of homosexuality is recognition. Christians must look for and avoid areas of temptation.

In I Thessalonians 5:22 the Holy Spirit gives this warning, "Avoid every kind of evil." (NIV) In James 4:7 we are told, "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." (NIV) Those tempted by the sin of homosexuality should be alert to the places

and atmospheres that present this temptation and avoid them. I Corinthians 15:33 tells us that "Bad company corrupts good character." (NIV) People that present temptation should also be avoided. The apostle Peter said, "Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, stand firm in the faith..." (I Peter 5:8-9, NIV) The war for control of your soul is real. Recognize your weaknesses. Avoid people, places and things that tempt you with this sin.

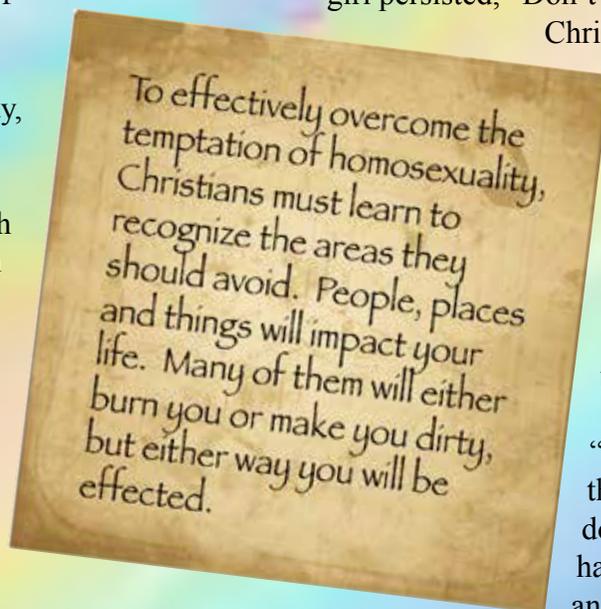
A young lady wanted to go to a party that she knew would include activities that Christians should avoid. Nevertheless, one of the most popular guys at school was having the party and she approached her father to plead for his permission.

"Honey, I love you and I don't want you to get hurt" was her father's response. "But Dad," the girl persisted, "Don't you trust me? I'm a strong Christian and I know how to keep from getting burned by bad situations!"

Seeing his daughter's determination, he led her over by the fireplace. "Sweetheart, I want you to reach down and pick up one of the coals from that fireplace."

"I'll show him!" the young girl thought to herself. She reached down and selected a coal that had rolled away from the fire and was no longer hot. With a proud look she lifted the coal, showed her father, then tossed it back. "See Dad, I know how to keep from getting burned!"

There was a short pause, then the father spoke. "Honey, look at your hand." The girl looked down at the palm of her hand. It was covered with black ash. "Sweetheart, a coal will either burn you or make you dirty, but either way you are effected."



To effectively overcome the temptation of homosexuality, Christians must learn to recognize the areas they should avoid. People, places and things will impact your life. Many of them will either burn you or make you dirty, but either way you will be effected.

Christians must also look for God's escape route. With every door that Satan closes in order to trap you in, God opens a window in order to let you out. In I Corinthians 10:13 we are given this wonderful promise, "...when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it." (NIV) Ask God to show you His windows.

In James 1:1-8, we are told to pray for wisdom when confronted with "trials of many kinds". (NIV) God has promised that "...he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear." (I Corinthians 10:13, NIV) Ask Him to give you wisdom to see the ways of escape.

L is for Leave

The final step to overcoming the temptation of homosexuality is using the escape route. Remember, it is not a sin to be tempted. Jesus was "tempted in every way, just as we are..." (Hebrews 4:15, NIV) The sin is when we fail to use the God-given escape route and allow the temptation to lead us into disobedience.

In the Old Testament, we have an example of two men who reacted differently when confronted with sin. Joseph was tempted sexually by his master's wife, but the scriptures say that he "ran" from the temptation. (Genesis 39:12, NIV) Although a brief time of discomfort followed his reaction, God remembered Joseph's dedication and He exalted him from a prisoner to a ruler over Egypt.

In II Samuel 11, we find the story of another man who also was confronted with sexual temptation. Unlike Joseph, King David refused to use God's escape route. He lusted over Bathsheba and called her to him. One sin led to another until his life was out of control. Guilt, cover-up, worry and shame ruled his life until he repented.

Like these two men, you can choose to deal with temptation by using God's escape route or by refusing His help. Going through God's exit is not always easy and it may not bring immediate reward, but God is faithful and, like Joseph, He will remember you.

On the other hand, if you refuse to access God's way out, guilt, cover-up, worry and shame will surely dominate your life as it did David's.

Conclusion:

The key to effectively dealing with the temptation of homosexuality can be found in the acronym A.L.L. God asks you to do A.L.L. that you can do. **A**sk for God's help. **L**ook for His way of escape and learn to **l**eave temptation behind.

In this section, we have been blessed to see God's help for the homosexual. Although He condemns homosexuality, God does love all sinners and He wants them all to come into a relationship of peace. He sent part of Himself to die in order to secure that life of peace and He *will* help us overcome temptation if we do A.L.L. that we can.



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Can a RAG ever be clean again?

The world has a way of stealing our peace and making us believe that we are not very special. It is the devil's greatest desire that you accept this lie and desert God as a result. The next time you feel like the world is stealing your peace, remember the acronym R.A.G. and the important words below.

R in this acronym stands for relief. It reminds us that our hurt is very real to God and it is His greatest desire that we come to Him for relief. Jesus once said, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor but the sick... I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners." (Matthew 9:12-13, NIV) Sin convicts. It causes shame, isolation and cramps of the conscience. We cannot find peace by turning inward. Let God wrap you up in His arms of forgiveness. Only He can give lasting relief.

A in the acronym stands for all. By this letter, we are reminded of the words from Romans 3:23, "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (NIV). Every member of the church has experienced a life of sin and, because of it, we are all worthy of eternal hell. Only by God's grace can we escape such a hopeless condition. You are not alone. Some may act as if they have found the state of perfection, but be assured they are worse off than those who humbly admit their sin. Lean on those who admit their weaknesses and never stop trying. It was only after much prayer that Paul realized, "...when I am weak, then I am strong." (II Corinthians 12:10, NIV) God cannot use a self-fulfilled person. The more we are willing to empty ourselves, the more He can use us.

G stands for Good Shepherd. Ultimately He is the only one who can bring healing to our wounds. Jesus once said that, as the Good Shepherd, He would leave ninety-nine safe behind if He could bring just one lonely lost sheep back into the fold.

When we sin, the guilt and remorse that sin creates can appear like a raging windstorm sucking all hope from our heart and all joy from our life. Shame, isolation and inner turmoil seem to be the only paths to travel. At times, life becomes so empty that we consider ending it all rather than continuing. Then faintly, out of the dark-



ness, we hear the tender voice of the Shepherd. It grows louder as He approaches. We do not know whether to hide in shame or run for rescue. Frozen in our tracks, we see the Master's face appear through the haze. "There you are", says the gentle Shepherd in a loving voice. "Why would you ever think that you had to stay out here all alone? Come on, hop up here in My arms and I'll carry you home." The strong hands of the Master lift us into His arms and He hides us safe under His coat. *Peace at last.*

It can happen! Peace can be restored. The raging storms of guilt and shame need not be endured alone. Your hurt is real and only Christ can give you lasting relief. You are not alone. We have all experienced the loneliness of sin. Listen to the voice of the Good Shepherd.

A fragile young girl, with curly brown hair, stood beside her mother's casket. With tears streaming down both cheeks, she looked up at the preacher and asked, "Does God cry?"

Have you ever hurt so badly or been so deeply discouraged that you wondered if God could even understand? Have you ever felt like your prayers were not getting through or that the words you whispered toward heaven were just lost in the wind? God knew that Satan would tempt you with thoughts like those. It was for that very reason that He sent part of Himself into the world to experience the full impact of the human experience.

Notice these scriptures.

Philippians 2:5-8 (NIV)

"Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And

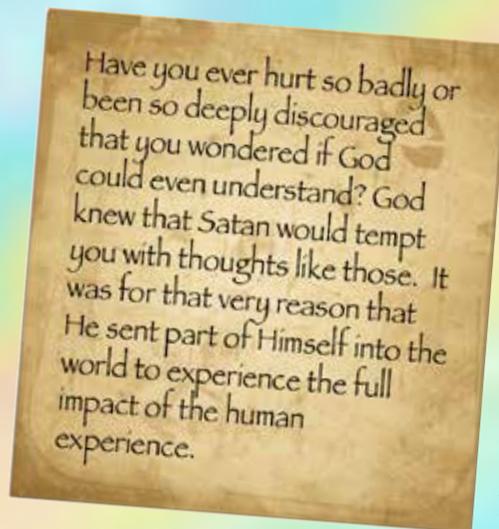
being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death - even death on a cross!"

Hebrews 2:17-18 (NIV)

"For this reason he had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people. Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted."

Hebrews 4:15 (NIV)

"For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are - yet without sin."



God knows what it is like to hurt.

Consider the following description of Christ's suffering during the crucifixion. As you read these words, ask yourself this question - Why did the all-powerful God of heaven go through this horrible suffering at the hands of those He had created when a simple

whisper from His lips could have ended all the pain? Why?

Imagine having a cruel, torturous soldier tie your hands with a rope and then toss one end over a beam high above your head. Imagine the strain as the rope is pulled tight, lifting your hands above your head, and finally pulling you off the ground just high enough so that your toes can barely touch.

Can you feel your muscles ache?

After stretching you out, the soldier walks over and picks up a whip. Not a bull-whip like we think of today. This whip has many long strands of leather with sharp pieces of rock or metal at the end of each strand. Panic runs through your mind.

Slowly, the huge soldier lifts the whip over his head and, with one quick flip of the wrist, he lays the leather thongs across your outstretched back. For a brief moment, it feels like the sting of a thousand needles. Then the razor-sharp rocks and metal sink deep into your back sending every muscle into convulsions.

Before you have time to capture your breath, the soldier gives a mighty pull on the whip and the bits of rock and metal begin tearing at your flesh. You scream as the horrible pain shoots through every part of your body, but before you have time to recover, the whip slaps at your back again. Not just once or twice, but over and over again the whip slaps you. The rock and metal slice through your flesh only to be yanked out again leaving behind bloody ribbons of flesh.

Can you even begin to imagine the horrible pain Jesus had to suffer in order to pay for our sins? You and I should have paid that awful price. You and I should have been the ones screaming. It should have been our backs that were shredded. It should have been our blood that was shed. But Jesus said, "No." Our older brother said, "Take me!" Jesus suffered in our place.

The whip was only part of this greusome experience. Imagine how it hurt as they dropped the heavy cross on His tender back. Imagine the pain as He drug it down the rough dirt road toward Calvary. Think of the horror as they reached the top

of the hill. Consider the cruelty of Roman soldiers shoving Him down across those rough wooden beams. Think of them grabbing His arm and holding it to the wood while another soldier drove a metal spike through His hand. Imagine the pain.

What followed was more of the same. The soldiers grabbed His other arm and held it against the beam. With one swing of the big hammer the horror was repeated. Every nerve was on fire with the pain of what seemed like a hot poker being driven through His hand.

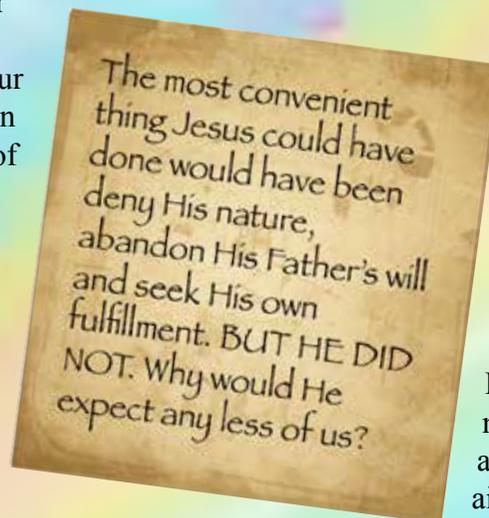
After that they moved to His feet and again the metal spike tore through flesh and sunk down deep into the wooden beam below.

For a brief moment, Jesus felt no new pain. He lay stretched out on the wooden cross awaiting their next torturous act.

Then it happened. Slowly, the earth began to sway beneath Him and the nails began to pull at His hands and feet. They were lifting the cross and dragging it toward a hole.

Again, pain shot through every part of His body as they twisted and turned the cross trying to get it into the hole. Finally, the cross slid over the edge and now the earth began swaying even more as they raised the cross high into the air. With a sick "thud", the cross hit the bottom sending sharp pain through His arms and legs. The nails tore at His flesh. The cross was in place and hours of intense suffering lay ahead.

Question: Why did God allow this to happen? Why did Jesus stay on the cross? Why didn't He call ten thousand angels to destroy the world and set Him free. He had the power. The same power that spoke the world into existence could have easily spoke it out again. Why did Jesus endure such torture?



The most convenient thing Jesus could have done would have been deny His nature, abandon His Father's will and seek His own fulfillment. BUT HE DID NOT. Why would He expect any less of us?

“For this reason he had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people. Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.” (Hebrews 2:17-18, NIV)

Why did Jesus endure the horrors of the cross? One reason, because He loved us!

The pressures of homosexual temptations can be unrelenting. They can seem overwhelming and almost torturous. But, then again, so was the cross! The most convenient thing Jesus could have done for himself would have been deny His nature, abandon His Father’s will and seek relief. BUT HE DID NOT.

God endured torture at the hands of the very people He had created. He did this because He loves YOU. The world will abuse you. The world will treat you like an old rag then throw you away when you have nothing left to offer. But not Jesus. Even in your worst condition, even when you have nothing left to offer Him, He still loves you.

Never forget the words of Romans 5:8, “God demonstrates his own love for us in this: *While we were still sinners*, Christ died for us.” (NIV) For Christ’s sake, keep the faith. Fight the good fight. Lift your eyes to the heavens. Focus on the goal.

Hebrews 12:1-2 (NKJV)

“...let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

