



## Review of Kevin DeYoung's *What does the Bible really teach about Homosexuality?*

James E. Phelan <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Veterans Health Administration, Columbus, Ohio ; Liberty University, Lynchburg, Virginia; Grand Canyon University, Phoenix, Arizona - United States.

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### BIBLIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Author: Kevin DeYoung  
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### Correspondence

James E. Phelan  
Email: [jpmphelan@sbcglobal.net](mailto:jpmphelan@sbcglobal.net)  
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### OVERVIEW OF THE BOOK

In his book, “*What does the Bible really teach about homosexuality?*” theologian Kevin DeYoung compares his own conservative biblical hermeneutics to those of contemporary revisionists as it relates to homosexuality throughout the Bible in the following: Sodom and Gomorrah, Leviticus and the Mosaic Law – covenant, Romans 1:18-27, 1 Corinthians 6 and 1 Timothy 1. In understanding these passages in the Bible, DeYoung concludes that homosexuality is immoral behavior, and that marriage should only be between one man and one woman. This contrasts with revisionists who argue that the homosexuality mentioned in the Bible was not the same as current same-sex relationships in committed contexts. The book is composed of two main parts. Although the book is written by a theologian, it is easy to read even in part 1 where DeYoung discusses his own biblical hermeneutics in simplest terms. Part 2 is objection handling which he does with graceful rebuttal. His conclusion is not about slamming those who might disagree with him (conservative vs. progressive), but rather exchanging potential discourse with grace while considering exegetical, historical, and theological conclusions. DeYoung includes an annotated bibliography of resources that are representative of his view, written in introductory, intermediate, and advanced levels.

In the first part of DeYoung’s book, he compares his own conservative biblical hermeneutics to those of contemporary revisionists as it relates to homosexuality, summarized here:<sup>1</sup>

#### *Sodom and Gomorrah*

Contemporary revisionists often argue that the sin of Sodom has no bearing on that of committed homosexual relationships, because it was about predatory sex. However, DeYoung says that the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah was not just a one-time attempted gang rape of angelic beings as revisionists would argue, but according to Jude, was a lifestyle of sensuality and sexual immorality. DeYoung says the discussion in Jude was about the exchange of what was natural (God’s design for a man to be with a woman) for what was unnatural (men pursuing men), not just predatory sex.

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<sup>1</sup>Kevin DeYoung, *What does the Bible really teach about homosexuality?* (Wheaton Ill: Crossway Publishers, 2015).

### **Leviticus and the Mosaic Law-covenant**

In Leviticus 18:22 (ESV) where it states, “You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination,” revisionists say that other prohibitions (e.g. wearing clothes of two fabrics, eating pork, etc.) are also under the Mosaic Law for which most Christians no longer necessarily adhere to. DeYoung asserts that all the other sexual prohibitions (e.g. adultery, incest, polygamy, bestiality, etc.) mentioned in the Old Testament are still clearly rejected, however. Therefore, it would be unusual for the prohibition of homosexual practices to be set aside when the rest of the sexual prohibitions are not.

### **Romans**

Paul speaks directly about same-sex behavior: “For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error” (Rom. 1:26-27, ESV). Revisionists argue that excess was the real problem. The ungodly in Paul’s mind were those who, though capable of heterosexual attraction, became dissatisfied with their usual sexual activity and sought out new encounters. Therefore, exclusive committed same-sex relationships were not what Paul was talking about. However, DeYoung asserts that what Paul said directly corresponded to the giving up of natural male-female sexual complementarity.

### **1 Corinthians 6 and 1 Timothy 1**

“...neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality [*oute malakoi oute arsenokoitai*] will inherit the kingdom of God” (1 Cor. 6: 9– 10, ESV).

“...the law is...laid down for...the ungodly and sinners, for...the sexually immoral, men who practice homosexuality [*arsenokoitai*]...and whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine, in accordance with the gospel of the glory of the blessed God...” (1 Tim. 1: 8– 11, ESV).

Revisionists argue that these verses do not refer to committed, consensual same-sex relationships, but rather to a specific kind of homosexual behavior, like pederasty or prostitution. However, DeYoung asserts that the intended meaning of the Greek translation, *malakoi* and *arsenokoitai* used in those verses, referred to sin related to homosexuality. DeYoung poses the question, “Why not use the word *paiderastes* (adult males who have sex with boys) if that’s all Paul had in mind?” If Paul wanted his readers to know he was referring only to exploitative forms of homosexuality, he would have explicitly said so.

### **Jesus**

And what about Jesus being silent about homosexuality? DeYoung tackles this question here:

Jesus didn’t have to give a special sermon on homosexuality because all of his listeners understood that same-sex behavior was prohibited in the Pentateuch and reckoned as one of the many expressions of sexual sin (*porneia*) off-limits for the Jews. Besides all this, there’s no reason to treat Jesus’s words (all of which were recorded by someone other than Jesus) as more authoritative than the rest of the Bible. He affirmed the abiding authority of the Old Testament (Matt. 5:17–18) and understood that his disciples would fill out the true meaning of his person and work (John 14:25–26; 16:12–15; cf. Luke 24:48–49; Acts 1:1–2).<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> DeYoung, *What does the Bible really teach about homosexuality?* Paragraph 6.

**Comparison of Revisionists and DeYoung**

	<b>Revisionists</b>	<b>DeYoung</b>
<b>Sodom and Gomorrah</b>	Referred only to predatory sex.	Referred to the exchange of what was natural (God's design for a man to be with a woman) for what was unnatural.
<b>Leviticus and the Mosaic Law-covenant</b>	Argues this was of Mosaic Law (the same as the prohibition of wearing clothes of 2 fabrics) for which most Christians no longer adhere to.	Questions why the prohibition against homosexual practice would be set aside when all other sexual prohibitions remain.
<b>Romans 1:18-27</b>	The real problem was excess, not committed same-sex relationships.	What Paul said directly corresponded to the giving up of natural male-female sexual complementarity.
<b>1 Corinthians 6 and 1 Timothy 1</b>	Does not refer to committed, consensual same-sex relationships, but rather to a specific kind of homosexual behavior, like pederasty or prostitution.	If Paul wanted his readers to know he was referring only to exploitative forms of homosexuality, he would have explicitly said so.
<b>Jesus</b>	Jesus was silent on the topic of homosexuality.	Jesus didn't have to give a special sermon on homosexuality because all his listeners understood that same-sex behavior was prohibited.

**CONCLUSION**

In understanding the Bible, DeYoung concludes that homosexuality is immoral behavior, and that marriage should only be between one man and one woman. In the second part of the book, he outlines 3 building blocks designed to help Christians think through the issue of same-sex attraction, and "ten commitments" he would like Christians and churches to consider. These commitments include telling the truth about sin, and extending God's forgiveness to all who are repentant. He sees homosexual activity as a sin that requires repentance. For those who assert that the Church is restrictive to those with same-sex desires, DeYoung says, "...we should not think that God always says what we want him to say in the midst of our pain. The Bible has to have the last word on what is good for us and what brings glory to God."<sup>3</sup> DeYoung says that repentance and change is possible, referencing the Greek *metanoia*, which means, "a change of mind that results in a change of life"<sup>4</sup> and 1 Corinthians 6:11 (ESV) where Paul says, "such were some of you."

The biggest lesson readers can take away from reading the book is how one can show grace, while considering one's own hermeneutics, given exegetical, historical, and theological conclusions.

<sup>3</sup> DeYoung, *What does the Bible really teach about homosexuality?* 116.

<sup>4</sup> DeYoung, *What does the Bible really teach about homosexuality?* 99.

Readers are cautioned to understand the author's own convictions, while contrasting with other (revisionists') views and walk away gaining insights from both sides.

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### **ABOUT AUTHOR**

James E. Phelan is an adjunct professor for Liberty University -Virginia and Grand Canyon University-Arizona, United States.