

HOMOSEXUALITY

REFERENCES

- ❖ Contemplations on the 10 Commandments by H. H. Pope Shenouda III
- ❖ Youth and Pure Living by H. G. Bishop Moussa
- ❖ Lesson on the 7th Commandment "You Shall Not Commit Adultery" (Exo. 20;14)

MEMORY VERSES

1 Peter 3:2-4

"...when they see the purity and reverence of your lives. Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as braided hair and the wearing of gold jewelry and fine clothes. Instead, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight."

LESSON STRUCTURE

- ❖ True meaning of LOVE.
- ❖ Sexuality is a precious gift from God for procreation and to strengthen the relationship between a MARRIED couple.
- ❖ Homosexuality is a form of sexual immorality that is totally abhorant to the Lord.

INTRODUCTION

The topic of Homosexuality is quite topical and the servant must be prepared to address this issue with wisdom. It is almost impossible these days to avoid relationships, whether they be at school or at work, with such people. Some of the class members may have "close" friends who are homosexuals and are having difficulty knowing how to manage the relationship with them.

It is important to gauge the classes reaction to this topic if it is raised. Do not be surprised if some in the class cannot see anything wrong with this or have an attitude that "*it isn't any of our business interfering in other people's affairs*".

The following **main points** should be stressed:

- True meaning of LOVE.
- Sexuality is a precious gift from God for procreation and to strengthen the relationship between a MARRIED couple.
- Homosexuality is a form of sexual promiscuity and is un-natural
- Homosexuality is a form of sexual immorality that is totally abhorrent to the Lord.
- How to treat homosexuals

The following strategy is recommended:

- Do not appear to be uncomfortable about the topic
- LISTEN to your class' thoughts on the topic.
This is a good topic to know how badly they have been poisoned by society. Even Catholic schools today are saying that homosexuality is normal and OK.
- Be open and frank
- Most importantly, keep your answers **short** and **to the point**. The response to this topic is simple: *Sexual promiscuity, in any form, is offensive to God* - particularly homosexuality, refer the verses below.

The servant should also review the lesson titled “Adultery – the Seventh Commandment”.

Attached are also some additional material:

- Statement from the Holy Synod of the Coptic Orthodox Church 3 Sep 2003
- Additional info

ACTIVITY

Conduct the questionnaire in Appendix A to get an understanding of the class’ perspective on the above topics.

LOVE

There are 3 definitions for LOVE as defined by the following Greek words:

- EROS (EROC) - a physical, sensual relationship. Its aim is purely a selfish one of satisfying one's physical LUST.
- PHILO (FILO) - this is a give and take relationship: “I'll help you only if you help me.”
- AGAPI (AGAPI) - this is a pure meaning of love which is characterised by GIVING. It's aim is to live in peace and harmony with everyone, helping others without expecting anything in return.

SEXUALITY

Message to the *SERVANT*

- ***be sure to put the lesson in its proper context. The issue is not purely sex!***
- ***It is an expression of love and a special gift given to strengthen the relationship of a married couple***
- ***we can conquer and control our feelings if we are disciplined and through the grace and power of the holy spirit.***
- ***If we fall into temptation, God is prepared to cleanse us of our sins through repentance and confession and gives us a fresh start.***
- ***the lesson is COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE if you do not give the youth practical means of combating these emotions!***
- ***do NOT over emphasise the issue of sex and adultery as if it is something insurmountable. Mention the consequences and punishments but do NOT over play them. Teenagers have enough pressures and need a word of encouragement not more burdens to carry. Emphasise the positive aspects of love and its proper definition and how to overcome temptation.***

When God created the universe and everything in it He saw that it was GOOD. Indeed, it is good depending upon the use that it is put to.

When we are baptised we receive the Holy Spirit making us temples of the Lord. With the Holy Spirit we are given the power to overcome all evil. As such we ought to aim to live PURE and HOLY lives. *Not just because we have to, but because by doing so our lives become full of happiness, peace and joy. Our lives in fact become more enjoyable and meaningful.* We become in control of our lives and not controlled by our feelings and emotions.

Sex is a gift given by God as a wonderful means by which a couple can express their love for one another. The fruit of this act of love is the miracle of procreation.

When practiced outside this God given rule, sex becomes debased, meaningless and insatiable. God explained that those who aim to fulfil the lusts of the flesh are slaves to their emotions and are not in control of their lives. This is particularly so of the sin of homosexuality.

- Adultery is likened to being UNCLEAN, 2 Pet 2:9,10. All sin is uncleanness but this especially so since it is an actual defilement of the body, the temple of God.

- ADULTERY IS INSATIABLE. It is a very bad sin to fall under its control. In the USA where sexual promiscuity is generally considered acceptable (where indecent pictures in magazines and immoral sexual scenes on television and in the movies is increasing) in society a very bad result has occurred. Not only have sexually transmitted diseases increased and also AIDS but there are far more rapes being committed. WHY?

It is not because they cannot find partners who are willing to have sex with them but because this physical lust outside the Holy union of marriage is one of EROS (EROC) love. It is TAKING not GIVING and it is INSATIABLE. It can never be fully satisfied. Hence, people try to find satisfaction by “trying different things” to improve/maximise the experience – leading to sexual deviance.

LAWS OF SEXUAL SIN

The following verses answer these issues quite succinctly. The suggested strategy in approaching the topic is to be short and to the point.

It is worth noting that irrespective of how society aims to justify the issue, God's response is quite clear. This is quite clear in the TRUE story of Sodom and Gomorrah, read Genesis chapters 18 and 19.

Lev 18:3 'According to the doings of the land of Egypt, where you dwelt, you shall **NOT DO**; and according to the doings of the land of Canaan, where I am bringing you, you shall not do; nor shall you walk in their ordinances.

Lev 18:4 'You shall observe My judgments and keep My ordinances, to walk in them: I *am* the LORD your God.

Lev 18:5 'You shall therefore keep My statutes and My judgments, which if a man does, he shall live by them: I *am* the LORD.

Lev 18:6 'None of you shall approach anyone who is near of kin to him, to uncover his nakedness: I *am* the LORD.

Lev 18:22 **'You shall not lie with a male as with a woman. It is an abomination.**

Lev 18:24 'Do not defile yourselves with any of these things; for by all these the nations are defiled, which I am casting out before you.

Lev 18:25 'For the land is defiled; therefore I visit the punishment of its iniquity upon it, and the land vomits out its inhabitants.

Lev 18:29 'For whoever commits any of these abominations, the persons who commit *them* shall be cut off from among their people.

Lev 20:13 'If a man lies with a male as he lies with a woman, **both of them have committed an abomination. They shall surely be put to death.** Their blood *shall be* upon them.

Lev 20:22 'You shall therefore keep all My statutes and all My judgments, and perform them, that the land where I am bringing you to dwell may not vomit you out.

St. Paul stresses how such temptations can, and should, be overcome.

Rom 1:24 Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves,

Rom 1:25 who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

Rom 1:26 For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. **For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature.**

Rom 1:27 **Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due.**

Rom 1:28 And even as they did not like to retain God in *their* knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting;
Rom 1:29 being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; *they are* whisperers,
Rom 1:30 backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents,
Rom 1:31 undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, unmerciful;
Rom 1:32 who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them.

Eph 5:3 But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints;
Eph 5:4 neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks.
Eph 5:5 **For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.**

Col 3:5 Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.
Col 3:6 Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience,
Col 3:7 in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them.

2 Pet 2:9,10

*"then the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment, and especially those who walk according to the flesh in the lust of **UNCLEANNES** and despise authority. They are presumptuous, self-willed. They are not afraid to speak evil of dignitaries ... "*

1 Cor 6:9-11

*"Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? **DO NOT BE DECEIVED**. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor **homosexuals**, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, **NOR** revilers, **NOR** extortioners **WILL INHERIT THE KINGDOM OF GOD**. **And such were some of you**. But you were **washed**, but you were **sanctified**, but you were **justified** in the **name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God**."*

James 1:13 - 18

*"Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he is **drawn away by his own desires and enticed**. **Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death**."*

Rev 17:4 The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the filthiness of her fornication.

Rev 17:5 And on her forehead a name was written: MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.

Rev 17:6 I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. And when I saw her, I marveled with great amazement.

Rev 19:1 After these things I heard a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, "Alleluia! Salvation and glory and honor and power *belong* to the Lord our God!

Rev 19:2 "For true and righteous *are* His judgments, because He has judged the great harlot who corrupted the earth with her fornication; and He has avenged on her the blood of His servants *shed* by her."

Rev 19:3 Again they said, "Alleluia! Her smoke rises up forever and ever!"

HOW TO TREAT HOMOSEXUALS

We must treat everyone with respect and sisterly/brotherly love. God loves the sinner but hates the sin.

However, it is best that we do not befriend them or get too close to them simply because “*evil company corrupts good habits*” (1 Corinthians 15:33). It is the same with people engaged in pre-marital relationships.

This is tragically seen in the true story of Lot. Even though they lived in Sodom and Gomorrah without committing homosexuality that was practiced so openly, their beliefs and conscience was affected. For example:

- ❖ When the men came to Lot’s house to “*know the strangers (the angels) carnally*”, Lot tried to protect the angles by offering them his daughters, (Gen 19:1-11).

Clearly, this is WRONG! How could he offer anyone, let alone his own daughters, to be abused like this!!!

Instead of trusting in God to protect him, after all the angels were physically with him, he tried to find a solution himself.

- ❖ Lot’s wife’s heart was given over to the love of the city and its filthy behaviour. The result was that even though the angels had warned her of the consequences to befall the city, and despite being dragged out by the hand by the angels, she still turned to look back at the city in longing. The result, she turned into a pillar of salt, (Gen 19:26-29).
- ❖ Lot’s daughters, rather than trusting in the Lord who saved them, devised their own carnal plan to maintain the family name. This is despite having seen and been personally saved by angels, (Gen 19:30-38).

It is for these reasons that we should not keep company with those who practice evil. One cannot stay in a room full of people smoking and not leave smelling of cigarette smoke.

We should not attack homosexuals personally.

It is worth noting that the Lord was most gentle and approachable to those who were considered outcasts by society:

- ❖ The Samaritan woman who had 5 separate relationships, (John 4).
- ❖ When the Lord saved the adulterous from being stoned, (John 8:1-11).
- ❖ The leper whom the Lord dared to touch and heal, (Matt 8:1-4).

The Lord here gives us the example how to deal with them: show them affection (in the proper sense) and affiliation (that they belong to God’s family and that there is HOPE). However, we should not accept their behaviour as acceptable either. As Christians, we have a duty to stand up for what is morally and Biblically correct and not allow laws to be changed that will eventually lead to the moral decay and destruction of society.

CONCLUSION

Sexual promiscuity, in any form whether it be in thought (Matt. 5:28) or deed, is abominable to God – particularly homosexuality. We must strive, through God’s grace and the power of the Holy Spirit with which we were sealed, to strive to live holy and pure lives. *For only the pure in heart will see God* (Matt. 5:8).

APPENDIX A

	Dating	Premarital Relationships	Homosexual Relationships	Abortion
What do your friends say about ..				
What does society (eg media, magazines, TV etc) say about ..				
What does GOD say about .. And, WHY?				
What do you think about ..				

Possible lesson starter:

Question: What is **wrong** with the following quote made by gay members of a church that considers itself Christian:

http://www.sdawf.org/rainbowsda/biblestudies/bible_intro.html

Introduction to the Bible Studies

As gay and lesbian Seventh-day Adventist Christians, we often have a difficult path to follow. At every one of our monthly support group meetings, someone expresses sadness at not being part of a church family, especially an Adventist church family. With virtually no role models, and such an abundance of ignorance in organized religion, we find it difficult to be a part of many congregations.

Although many of us are not traditional Adventists, many of us would like to worship in a comfortable and familiar Adventist tradition. We must not depend on those who cannot understand or support us; we must depend on ourselves and our personal relationship with our God.

Statement From the Holy Synod of the Coptic Orthodox Church

The Holy Synod of the Coptic Orthodox Church, in his meeting of Wednesday morning 3rd of Sept. 2003 presided by His Holiness Pope Shenouda III, in Saint Anthony Church, in the Papal Residence Anba Rewis Bldg., Cairo, after discussing the actions of some Western Churches, trying to legalize Homosexuality, Same-sex marriage, the ordination of homosexuals in different pastoral degrees, and the process to ordain a homosexual bishop in the Episcopal Church of New Hampshire, U.S.A., consequently - in this special meeting - the Holy Synod of the Coptic Orthodox Church decided unanimously the strong condemnation of these acts, that violate the teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Scriptures: Old and New Testaments. This complies with our responsibility to witness for the truth of the Gospel.

1- Jesus Christ condemned homosexuality in an explicit way, when He spoke about the devastation of Sodom & Gomorrah (Lk 10:12). See also (Gen 19:24 - Jud 7). The Holy Bible warns also saying: "Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor Sodomites, nor thieves... will inherit the Kingdom of God" (1 Cor 6:9,10). See also (Rom. 1:26-32), and what is mentioned in Old Testament: "If a man also lie with mankind, as he lie with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination: they shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them" (Lev 8:22 -Lev 20:13).

2- Same - sex marriage is against the Divine plan for marriage and its purpose of procreation: "But from the beginning of the creation, God made them male and female, for this reason a man shall leave his father and mother, and be joined to his wife" (Mk 10:6,7). See also (Mt 19:4-6; Eph 5:31, Gen 1:27, Gen 2:24).

3- Those who are ordained for Church ministry must uphold the teachings of the Holy Bible. "*The bishop must be blameless... of good behavior., able to teach*" (1Tim 3:2). Consequently, we disapprove and condemn strongly the same - sex marriage generally, and the ordination of homosexuals, which is more erroneous, and more dangerous.

The Holy Synod declares:

1- That these movements contradict the teachings of the Holy Bible, and threaten the stability of natural marriage, the nature of forming a family, the morals of the society, the purity of the Church, the future of the efforts towards Christian unity, and the Ecumenical movements.

2- Those who rely on the chains of human rights to encourage homosexuality, neglect the fact that it is not the right of any person to spoil himself or the other. Real freedom does not ruin the human nature, nor contradict with the Divine Commandments, morals, and general ethics.

3- We applaud the courageous voices, in and outside those Churches, which oppose Homosexuality, Same - Sex Marriage, ordination of Homosexuals in pastoral orders.

We call these Churches to obey the Biblical Teachings without compromise or change. The members of these Churches has no right to vote on the Biblical Divine Commandments.

4- This abnormal conduct is a stumbling block for other people, bad example and fame, and dangerous for the future of these Churches themselves leading to divisions and disintegration.

5- While we condemn homosexuality, we invite those who are under this sin to repent out of concern for their eternal life.

Our Holy Synod decided to publish this statement on all possible Media inside and outside Egypt, and to send it

to all Ecumenical Councils, such as the World Council of Churches, the Middle East Council of Churches, The Councils of America, Canada, Europe, Australia, and Africa.

Lesson on Homosexuality – Issues to be considered

- It is prohibited to contradict or even to say anything against homosexuals. In society today, laws have given them as many rights, if not more, as everyone else especially laws prohibiting what they call homophobic. To express an opinion or view contrary to theirs is considered by society to be ignorant and narrow minded as well as being labelled as religious fanatics and behind the times. They consider themselves as open minded and yet others are not permitted to oppose their view. This is very serious.
- Argument that the Bible is open to interpretation and that the true message of the Bible is that of being true to yourself and a good person which is sufficient and that a homosexual can live such a life regardless of their sexual preference. This is clearly incorrect. God gives us rules on how to live our lives as well as prohibiting certain conduct otherwise Jesus crucifixion and resurrection which was done to allow for the forgiveness of sins is not required. Human wisdom is being used to interpret the Bible and are not reading the Bible at all but enforcing their own social rules by manipulating the message of Christ to support their views.
- Some rules in the O.T. have been abandoned such as slavery, stoning and other death penalties as provided for in Leviticus. Why then is the prohibition on homosexuality remains?? It is a matter of context and the Bible must be taken as a whole, not to choose this and ignore other passages which re-affirm the prohibition.
- Does God contradict himself by establishing one standard in the O.T. and one in the N.T.? Is it possible that the God in the O.T. is not the same as that in the N.T.? Not possible as God is not a man but is the eternal creator and being, not prone or able to making a mistake nor contradiction.
- If we are all sinners then even priest, Bishops etc are sinners also. If that is the case then what is wrong with ordaining gay people to positions in the church? Or are priest immune from sin?? The preachers are to comply with the Bible including refraining from sexual immorality and to practice repentance. They are not exempt from this (1 Tim 3:2) but are expected to be an example and therefore to uphold this first and foremost.
- Is the church falling behind the times – should the church change with social change or should the church stay consistent in its views of such social aspects as homosexuality?? The following are some arguments that are currently being made by those supporting the gay element in other churches:
 - Is the church following human conscience or the divine laws and commandments of the Lord our God?
 - Did Jesus condemn homosexuality?
 - Because Jesus challenged much of what the Jews at the time did in their practices does this mean that he was changing everything??? Was he clearing out the old law and instituting a new rule of love and kindness??
 - Is it wrong to let gay people serve in a christian manner even if they are doing much good?? E.g. the gay priest in America who on 9/11 was giving a victim his last rights when he was killed himself by debris, he was doing good, what is wrong with this??
 - Are we treating homosexuality as a sin different from other sins such as fornication, adultery, etc?? Isn't all sin the same? If so, then why so much opposition to this one particular sin?
 - Are we judging by taking the stand that we are? Are we condemning them?
 - Are we preaching hatred and abuse by proclaiming homosexuality as a sin? NO,NO,NO!

- What about the prohibition of homosexuality in Islam, Hinduism and Sikhism?
- Because homosexuals can do good and serve, why prohibit them from doing this? Are we excluding them from the church by doing this and if so why?
- Is homosexuality natural? Are people not born homosexual as well as heterosexual?? Is this not supported by the great number of homosexuals in existence today??
- By taking a Christian stand are we discriminating against homosexuals and is this not contrary to our beliefs of love, mercy and kindness and the message of Jesus??

The answers to these questions are in the body of the lesson above.

