

Denison: Bible sets Christian view of homosexuality

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LEWISVILLE—The Bible clearly speaks against homosexual behavior, but the prevailing culture doesn't want to hear it, Jim Denison of the [Denison Forum on Truth and Culture](#) told participants at a [Denton Baptist Association](#) seminar.

Jim Denison Less than 4 percent of the U.S. population is homosexual, according to the Institute of Medicine, even though far higher numbers have been purported, Denison said.

"The actual statistic seems to be 3.8 percent, and a number of studies will say that is too high," he said. Although other studies have reported as much as 20 percent of the population is homosexual, those studies involve bias, he added.

The Bible clearly prohibits homosexual activity, Denison asserted. Some critics seek to dismiss New Testament references against homosexual behavior by insisting the Apostle Paul was homophobic and wrong in his stance on homosexuality, just as he was wrong about slavery and the role of women.

"Myself, I will take the position that Paul was not wrong—at all," Denison insisted. Rather, many readers have misinterpreted Paul's positions. For instance, in regard to slavery, Paul moved as far as his first century context would allow, he asserted.

"The New Testament was the most progressive document in the early world as a means of advancing the abolition of slavery," Denison said.

Similarly, Paul's position regarding women also has been misinterpreted, he added. In his letters to Timothy, Paul addressed a community in Ephesus where the cult of Artemis dominated, and any woman speaking out in a religious setting would be thought to be a temple prostitute, he explained.



“I don't think Paul was wrong on any subject he spoke to under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit,” Denison said. “But that is a very common argument: Paul was wrong on slavery; Paul was wrong on women; therefore, he was wrong on this.

“At the end of the day, you have to decide for yourself what your theology is relative to homosexual practice and therefore relative to same-sex marriage. You have to make a decision as regards what you believe is the right way to do this. My only encouragement to you would be decide what you believe the Bible intends to say and live by that, whatever the consequences.

Interpret culture by the Bible

“Don't let culture interpret Scripture—on this or any subject. When I taught hermeneutics, we would say you can put culture in front of the Bible and interpret the Bible through the culture, or you can put the Bible in front of

the culture and interpret culture by the Bible. I want to encourage you to do that.”

Although many assert homosexuality has a genetic link, Denison pointed out the American Psychological Association states, “There is no consensus about the exact reasons that an individual develops a heterosexual, bisexual, gay or lesbian orientation.”

“It is nonetheless the case, according to at least the counselors I have spoken to and the research I’ve been able to do on this, that most people who will say to counselors that they are homosexual in orientation do not relate this as a choice that they have made,” Denison said. While a few say they made the choice to pursue a homosexual lifestyle, they are in the minority.

“The vast majority of the people I have spoken with who say they are homosexual in their orientation would not say they have chosen that, but that as far back as they can remember, they were attracted to the same sex,” Denison said.

“That doesn’t mean that God made them that way, or that God endorses homosexual orientation. You have the fall to consider, and that the fall changes the basic wiring of humans. You obviously have environmental factors to consider.”

Many people have a variety of predispositions toward sin, but that doesn’t make sin permissible, he insisted.

“Being gay is not the unpardonable sin,” he said. “I also make a distinction between homosexual orientation and homosexual behavior. I’m going to say to you that the Bible forbids homosexual behavior; it does not condemn a person who is homosexual in their orientation.

Celibate homosexuals

“Some of my greatest heroes are celibate homosexuals—people whose orientation is homosexual but who believe the Bible and believe the Bible is true and right when it tells them homosexual behavior is harmful.”

There is no prohibition against homosexuals becoming Christians, he said.

“I can’t find in the Bible a specific request that a person has to repent of a specific sin before they can become a Christian,” he said. “When I became a Christian, I repented of my sin, but I did that in a fairly generic sense. Nobody told me I had to sit down and make a catalogue of every sin in my life, and repent specifically of those and choose never practice them again before I could become a Christian.

“If that’s the case, there are a lot of us who have some issues with our salvation. I don’t know anyone who has ever been asked to do that, and I don’t know of any biblical examples of that.

No barrier to becoming a Christian

“I would say that once a person becomes a Christian, if they are in a homosexual lifestyle, the Holy Spirit will want to work in their life toward sanctification, toward consecration and there in fact may be a Spirit-empowered change in their orientation eventually. But I would not put that as a barrier in front of their becoming a Christian.

“Now it is a whole separate question to church membership and being active in your church.”

Christians who believe homosexual behavior is sinful must win the right to say it in love, because the prevailing culture rejects that viewpoint, he said.

“The culture assumes my position today is homophobic, bigoted, prejudiced and intolerant. The culture has come to decide I am relative to homosexuals

what the KKK was relative to African Americans—and that I don't get to have a position on this," he said. "I have to earn the right to be heard now."