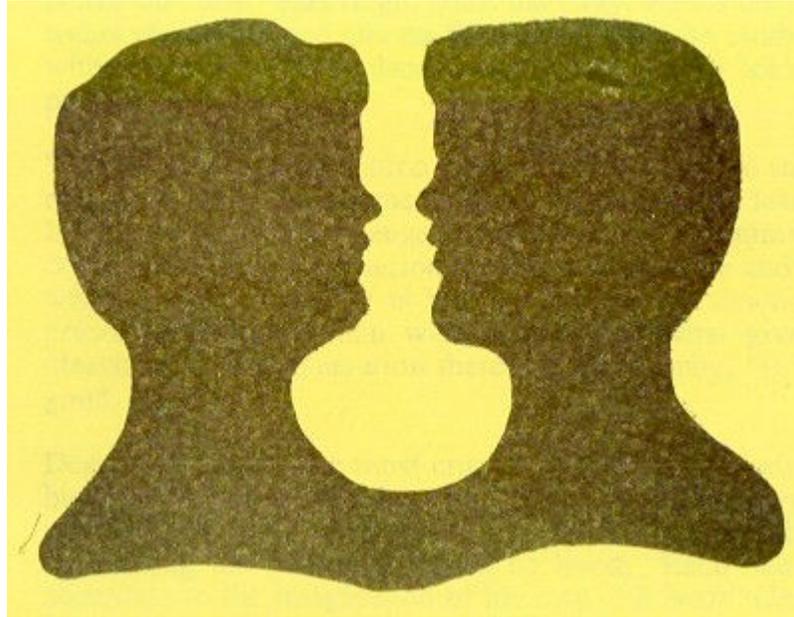


# **LICENTIOUSNESS**

**(HOMOSEXUALITY/LESBIANISM)**

## **A VARIETY OF SINS**



-- Guy V. Caskey

**Front Cover**

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# **LICENTIOUSNESS**

**(HOMOSEXUALITY/LESBIANISM)**

## **A VARIETY OF SINS**

Where did God stand on this issue? By what standard are we governed in our life and conduct? Whose rule do we follow? Do we regulate our own lives? Do we manage our own affairs? Do we establish our own principles? Is there no higher model than human guidelines? What is the authority of our own administration? It is true that man legislates laws, mandates regulations and enacts decrees, but what is the basis for this instruction? What is the determining factor for his directives? It is true that man bears reign, holds the sway, wields the scepter, wears the crown and sits on the throne, but who clothed him with authority? What explanations do we have for his holding this prerogative?

Why do men in every nation know that it is wrong to steal, lie, murder and take another man's wife? Where did they learn this? Is there no yardstick or gauge or pattern which legitimizes man's conduct? Is there no criterion by which to measure and decide what is right and what is wrong? Should we sanction and prescribe anything man wants to do and what gives him pleasure? In this generation there is a philosophy, "If it feels good, do it."

Describing one of the most crucial and critical periods in the history of Israel, the prophet said: "Everyone did what was right in his own eyes (Judges 17:6; 21:25). Jeremiah said, concerning the period in which he lived: "Each one walks according to the imagination of his own evil heart" (Jeremiah 16:12). Isaiah said something similar about the people of his day: "For they would not walk in His ways, nor were they obedient to His law" (Isaiah 42:24). He continued that thought later by saying: "I have stretched out My hands all day long to a rebellious people, who walk in a way that is not good, according to their own thoughts" (Isaiah 65:2). Their own thoughts comprised the standard by which they were governed and guided in their lives. What men need to learn all over the world is the truth embodied in this inspired statement: "O Lord I know the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man who walks to direct his own steps" (Jeremiah 10:23). And they also

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need to learn the truth in this divine attestation: "There is a way which seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death" (Proverbs 14:12). When each one walks according to the imagination of his own heart, decides his own course, disregards a higher than human standard, there will be anarchy—living without rule. The standard becomes: "Every way of man is right in his own eyes (Proverbs 21:2).

But let us return to the question: "Where did (and does) God stand on this issue?" The answer is easily found and clearly understood. "Now before they lay down, the men of the city, the men of Sodom, both old and young, all the people from every quarter, surrounded the house. And they called to Lot and said to him, 'Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out that we may know them carnally' " (Genesis 19:4-5). The NIV renders this passage: "Bring them out so that we can have sex with them." The living Bible translates it: "Bring out those men to us so we can rape them."

"Now as they were enjoying themselves, suddenly certain men of the city, perverted men, surrounded the house and beat on the door. They spoke to the master of the house, the old man, saying, 'Bring out the man who came to your house, that we may know him carnally' " (Judges 19:22). The NIV, as in the Genesis passages, renders this: "Bring out the man who came to your house so we can have sex with him."

Jeremiah calls such sins an abomination, saying that the people who were guilty "were not at all ashamed nor did they know how to blush" (Jeremiah 6:15; 8:12). "You shall not lie with a male as with a woman. It is an abomination" (Leviticus 18:22). "If a man also lie with mankind as he lieth with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination: they shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them". "For whosoever shall commit any of these abominations, even the souls

that commit them shall be cut off among their people (Leviticus 18:29). "And he brake down the houses of the sodomites, that were by the house of the Lord,... (II Kings 23:7). "There were even male shrine prostitutes in the land; the people engaged in all the detestable practices of the nations the Lord had driven out before the Israelites" (I Kings 14:24—NIV). The Septuagint translation of I Kings 15:12 reads: "And he removed the sod-

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omites out of the land, and abolished all the practices which his fathers had kept up." "He closed all the houses of male prostitution that still continued from the days of his father Asa" (I Kings 22:46—*The Living Bible*). "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you ..." (I Corinthians 6:9-11).

"Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, for whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for men stealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine; according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust" (I Timothy 1:9-11)

"Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonor their own bodies between themselves: who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen. For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: and likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet. And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them" (Romans 1:24-32)

In the final analysis of this whole subject, the conclusion will be found in the answer to the question: "By whose standard shall we live—man's or God's?"

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## 3

# LICENTIOUSNESS

## A VARIETY OF SINS

The term *licentiousness* is used both generally and specifically. That is, there are times when it covers a multitude of sins, and there are other times when it applies to some specific sin. So, it would be accurate to say that this sin includes a vast list in the New Testament and one would have to read carefully the context in order to be able to identify it.

### The Definition of the Term

As the term is defined in the outset of this lesson, the applications of it will become clear. The Random House College Dictionary defines it in the secular, rather than in the Biblical sense: "sexually unrestrained; lewd. Unrestrained by law or morality; lawless; immoral. Going beyond customary or proper bounds or limits. Abandoned, profligate." The word on which we will focus more frequently in this study is *aselgeia* and we hope to consolidate those definitions and apply them to the sins that are highlighted under understanding of the subject.

Liddell & Scott, in their classical lexicon, list the following words in their clarification of the word: "wanton violence, insolence, brutality, lewd, outrageous." You are able to see from these that it may be employed in different situations and has quite a number of applications.

Wilbur Gingrich, in his *Shorter Lexicon of the Greek New Testament* defines it: "licentiousness, debauchery, sensuality, insolence." And then refers to Jude 4: "For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ."

Kittel says: "In the New Testament the older and sensual sense of voluptuousness or debauchery is relevant." And then he quotes from Jesus in Mark 7:21-23 "... Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, licentiousness, and evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness, All these evils come from within and defile a man." Kittel continues by saying: "It characterized

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Sodom and Gomorrah" (II Peter 2:7), which reads, "... and delivered righteous Lot, who was oppressed with the filthy conduct of the wicked." "And is characterizes the pagan world generally" (Ephesians 4:19), which tells us "who being past feeling, have given themselves over to licentiousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness."

Then he adds that it characterizes "heresy and apostasy" (Jude 4). Kittel continues: "The special sense of sexual excess is probable in Galatians 5:19—"Now the works of

the flesh are evident, which are adultery, fornication, uncleanness, licentiousness ..." "And the special sense of sexual excess is certain in Romans 13:13 and II Corinthians 12:21." It will help us in our comprehension of the subject under consideration to read these: "Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in licentiousness and lewdness, not in strife and envy." "And lest, when I come again, my God will humble me among you, and I shall mourn for many who have sinned before and have not repented of the uncleanness, fornication, and licentiousness which they have practiced." Robertson's *Word Pictures of the New Testament* gives this very cogent but ugly definition: "unrestrained sex instinct." Wuest and Vincent provide this definition: "lawless insolence and wanton caprice—wantonness adequately renders it here." Bullinger: "Excess immoderation in anything." Abbott-Smith: "Licentiousness, wantonness, excess." Arndt & Gingrich: "Debauchery, sensuality; give one's self over to debauchery; live licentiously; follow the inclination to sensuality; especially sexual excesses; indecent conduct."

*Analytical Greek Lexicon*: "Outrageous intemperance; voluptuously, wantonly." The references that are given to make application of this meaning are I Timothy 5:6: "But she who lives in pleasure is dead while she lives" and "You have lived on the earth in pleasure and luxury; you have fattened your hearts as in a day of slaughter" (James 5:5).

Thayer, in his *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* has a rather extensive definition of the term: "The conduct and character of one who is *aselgeia* (a word which some suppose to be compounded with 'a' which is a negative, and *Selge*—the name of a city in Pisidia whose citizens excelled in strictness of morals)." The negative would indicate that they excelled in im-

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morality, making it an abhorrent, repulsive word. And, indeed, it is despicable when one considers the nature of the sins it describes and the attitude of the people who engage in them have toward their revolting conduct. Then, Thayer gives the definition of the expression: "Unbridled lust, excess, licentiousness, lasciviousness, wantonness, outrageous, shamelessness, insolence (Mark 7:22); of gluttony and venery (Jude 4); of carnality, lasciviousness (II Corinthians 12:21); manners, as filthy words, indecent bodily movements, unchaste handling of males and females (Romans 13:13); of the wantonness of women."

William Barclay, in *New Testament Words*, remarks: "In many ways *aselgeia* is the ugliest word in the list of New Testament sins." He gives some of the classical definitions, as well as New Testament meanings. Plato used it in the sense of *impudence*. A later writer gave it this connotation: "Preparedness for every pleasure." It is described as "the spirit that knows no restraints and which dares whatever caprice and wanton insolence suggest." The man who is *aselgeia* shocks public decency. He is the man who is lost to shame. It reminds one of the words of Jeremiah: "Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? No! They were not at all ashamed, nor did they know how to blush" (Jeremiah 8:12; 6:15).

There is enough decency and respectability in most men to seek to hide their sin, but one who commits *aselgeia*, *licentiousness* is long past that point. Many young people

in this country endeavor to hide from their family the fact that they are addicted to drugs, and, yet, in the end, they are so habituated to narcotics, they will stoop and cower, whine and grovel, openly to satisfy their body's demand for this devastating dope which they hope will tranquilize them for a few more moments. Eventually they do so without restraint and in the complete absence of shame because the drug has so thoroughly and utterly mastered them.

## The Sin In Conjunction With Other Sins

Sin scarcely ever works singly; or operates alone. There is always a host of willing companions! In reading your Bible, you have noticed the long columns and how they are connected. The roster, with a discussion of each sin, would make a book of considerable size.

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1. Three times this sin, *aselgeia*, is found in proximity to *pleonexia*, which is most commonly translated *covetousness* (Mark 7:22; Ephesians 4:19; II Peter 2:3). This is an unbridled passion to get more and to have more. It is an insatiable appetite for things which are forbidden, an unquenchable thirst for what one should not desire in the first place. In its association with *licentiousness* it becomes a voracious greed.

2. In four cases the sin *aselgeia*, is connected, in the same vicinity, with *adultery*, (*moikia*). But it is also in the same company with *lust* and *sexual sin*. In this association, there is the idea of sheer *animal lust*. I hesitate to use the term animal lust because animals copulate naturally and out of the God-given urge to reproduce. But *aselgeia* is immorality, wickedness, of which the animal is not guilty.

It is a dereliction, because of misuse and exploitation, that God never intended in his design for man's sexuality. In this word is found a shameless abomination which infracts the will of God for marriage and the home. The mere gratification of physical desire, apart from a meaningful relationship and a noble purpose, is ungodliness. New Testament writers give particular emphasis to this topic (Mark 7:22; II Corinthians 12:21; Galatians 5:19; II Peter 2:18).

3. In three cases, this word, *aselgeia*, is near drunkenness. So, you see that *licentiousness* has a broad scope of applications, and we will consider these more in depth as we proceed. Do not lose sight of the concept of self-indulgence inherent in this word. It amounts to self-gratification for hearty enjoyment of physical pleasure. Let it be remembered that the Bible teaches (and experience imparts) that the sensuous pleasure is short lived. It is but for a season. Fleshly and carnal delight have a short life span!

Some believe that a life of lasciviousness will always be sunshine and happiness. they are so enchanted, but bewitched, by this bodily, erotic rapture. If is forgotten that the death of such ecstasy is rapidly approaching. Their bliss will not long be blissful. Their paradise is transformed into an abyss of regret and profound confusion. Although we have read most of the passages in which the word

*lasciviousness/licentiousness* is found, I would like to list them in their order and quote them in

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the context of each passage. This should help us in our understanding and utilization of each.

## **Passages In Which The Term Is Used**

"For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, licentiousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within and defile a man" (Mark 7:21-23).

"Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in licentiousness and lewdness, not in strife and envy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts" (Romans 13:13-14).

"For I fear lest, when I come I shall not find you such as I wish, and that I shall be found by you such as you do not wish; lest there be contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, backbiting, whisperings, conceits, tumults; and lest, when I come again, my God will humble me among you, and I shall mourn for many who have sinned before and have not repented of the uncleanness, fornication, and licentiousness which they have practiced" (II Corinthians 12:20-21).

"Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God" (Galatians 5:19-21).

"I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind, having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardening of their heart; who, being past feeling have given themselves over to licentiousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. But you have not so learned Christ, if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus: that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to

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the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in righteousness and true holiness" (Ephesians 4:17-24).

"For we have spent enough of our past lifetime in doing the will of the Gentiles—when we walked in licentiousness, lusts, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries. In regard to these, they think it strange that you do not run with them in the same flood of dissipation, speaking evil of you. They will give an account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead" (I Peter 4:3-5)

"For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell [*Tartarus*] and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment; and did not spare the ancient world, but saved Noah, of eight people, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly; and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned them to destruction, making them an example to those who afterward would live ungodly; and delivered righteous Lot, who was oppressed with the filthy conduct of the wicked (for that righteous man, dwelling among them, tormented his righteous soul from day to day by seeing and hearing their lawless deeds)—then the Lord knows how to deliver the ungodly 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 uncleanness and despise authority" (II Peter 2:4-10).

"For when they speak great swelling words of emptiness, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through licentiousness, the ones who have actually escaped from those who live in error. While they promise them liberty, they themselves are slaves of corruption, for by whom a person is overcome, by him also he is brought into bondage" (II Peter 2:18-19)

"Beloved, while I very diligently write to you concerning the common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints. For certain men, have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for the condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus

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Christ. But I want to remind you, though you once knew this, that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe. And the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own habitation, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day; as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities around them in similar manner to these, having given themselves over to sexual immorality and gone after strange flesh, are set forth as an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire. Likewise also these dreamers defile the flesh, reject authority, and speak evil of dignitaries" (Jude 3-8)

Note carefully the company in which this sin, *lasciviousness/ licentiousness*, is always found. There is a very close connection, a linkage, between this sin and the others

named in that roster—murder, idolatry, greed, and all sorts of sexual immorality. The word always has the signification of promiscuity. And by that I do not mean just loose and lax in one's morals; but I mean licentious, unchaste, wanton, whorish and viciousness in all this. There is the underlying meaning, inherent in the word, of sexual misconduct. And in the Scriptures there is an allusion to the sin of homosexuality.

## Homosexuality

Did you notice how many times in the list where the word *licentiousness* is used, Sodom and Gomorrah is also found? No one has to question the implication in the names. Homosexuality and sodomy are used interchangeably. The hidden character of the sin lies veiled in this city of the plain. But immediately and without question one knows the name Sodom is tantamount to homosexuality. One who has read the Old Testament Scriptures is informed as to what took place in Sodom.

Two messengers from the Lord visited Lot in Sodom. "Now before they lay down, the men of the city, the men of Sodom, both old and young, all the people from every quarter, surrounded the house. And they called to Lot and said to him, 'Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us, that we may know them carnally' " (Genesis 19:4-5). The *New International Version* renders this: "Bring them out to us that we can have sex with them." *The Living Bible* translates it:

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"Bring out those men to us so we can rape them." The word used in the New Testament for *homosexuality* is *arsenokoites*. It is a compound word, *arsen* = male + *koite* = a bed. And Thayer defines it: "One who lies with a male as with a female, a sodomite." Here are the passages in which the term is used: "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" (I Corinthians 6:9-10).

It would appear that here are two words in this passage for the same sexual activity—*homosexuals* and *sodomites*. One of the words is a general term for homosexual, *arsenokoites*. Arndt & Gingrich define this word as: "A male homosexual, pederast, sodomite."

The other is *malakos*. This word is defined by Thayer as: "Effeminate, of a catamite, a male who submits his body to unnatural lewdness." These definitions do not help us very much unless we know the meanings of the words which are used to define the terms. A catamite is a boy who is kept for pederastic purposes. But what does that mean? A *pederast* is a lover of boys; and pederasty is sexual relations between two males, especially when one is a minor.

So Paul used two words here, one to explain that homosexuality is an illicit sexual activity between two males, and the other word says that it is a disgraceful, prohibited, intimate, carnal, and erotic relation between a man and a boy.

There are several words for this last practice: (1) *paiderastes*, and this is the word that would be translated into English by the term *pederasty*. It means "lover of boys." This has an interesting history. The word *pais* means boy or small child. The other part of the word is *erastus*. This means *beloved*. A man by the name of Erastus was converted by Paul and was the treasurer of the city of Corinth (Romans 16:23; II Timothy 4:20); and Paul sent Timothy and Erastus to Macedonia (Acts 19:22). He was responsible for the Treasury Building in Corinth, and perhaps other buildings. His name is on a large stone slab once on the side of that building and still to be seen in the ruins of that ancient city. (2) Another word is *paidophthoros*, and this term

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means "corrupter of boys." "To corrupt, morally deprave; moral corruption." (3) A third word is *arrenomanes*, and the definition of this expression is "mad after males." To be disordered in mind, mad, madness, insanity (Acts 26:24).

All of it is *homosexuality* and its baseness is seen in its league with a host of other offenses, equally infamous! "Knowing this: that the law is not made for a righteous person, but for the lawless and insubordinate, for the ungodly and for sinners, for the unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, for fornicators, for sodomites, for kidnappers, for liars, for perjurers, and if there is any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine" (I Timothy 1:9-10).

How ironic and contemptuous can a person be in our day who elevates homosexuality to a respectable *lifestyle*? In the Bible it is an unspeakable abomination; in our society in the twentieth century, men and women want to make it legitimate and legal. They contemptuously assert that it is simply a matter of choice, and they excuse it, or endeavor to prove its validity by alleging that it is "constitutionally inherited." Some claim that it is a hormonal imbalance, or a genetic or chromosomal problem, and that, therefore, the homosexual or lesbian, is not accountable or liable for his or her conduct.

Most modern geneticists do not teach that the basis of character traits or behavior patterns is found in the genes. According to Dr. Charles Wahl, the vast preponderance of evidence clearly indicates that homosexuality is a learned disorder and is not genetically inherited (Wahl p. 194).

There is no proof that homosexuality is caused by a hormonal imbalance. Dr. Evelyn Hooker, who is famous for her research on homosexuality, states "there is no evidence that homosexuals have faulty hormone levels, or that their sexual orientation can be changed with hormone injections" (Chance and Hooker, p. 55).

While many years of research have contributed to our understanding of homosexuality, its cause or causes remain controversial. However, it can be maintained that there is no justification for a homosexual to claim that he was born a homosexual or that he cannot change his attitude and behavior.

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If one can remove personal responsibility, then blame can be shifted to someone else. Attorneys in our courts today, in building a defense for a client who is accused of a criminal act, repair to an age-old argument that the man accused of the offense could not be responsible because it was congenital hereditary, and therefore an inborn characteristic disposition. If that doesn't work to his advantage, he may choose to blame his environment, his background, which had such an impact upon his life he was not left with power of choice

But may I say to you that scientific and medical evidence point to the fact that homosexuality is a learned behavior. There may be some other contributing factors, but they do not rob a person of self-control. He is still a creature of volition, of will power. He becomes a homosexual by choice. It is not genetic, anatomic, or physiologic make-up. It is by his own initiative that he decides to walk in this path! Otherwise there would not be such strong censure in the word of God against this sin, and God, in His justice, would not denounce it as damnable to the person's soul.

Lot plead with his fellow townsmen in Sodom to refrain from "this wicked thing." Peter branded it as "lawless deeds" and called it "filthy conduct." Jude called it "sexual immorality and perversion." The law strictly forbade such deportment: "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" (Leviticus 20:13).

There is a Sodom-Gomorrah rerun recorded in Judges 19. A Levite from the hill country of Ephraim had gone after his runaway concubine. On his return journey, he and his company decided to spend the night in Gibeah among fellow countrymen, rather than among aliens. It must have been an inhospitable people for no one invited him into his home, until an old gentleman came in from his day's work. He took the party into his home.

And here is what happened: "While they were enjoying themselves, some of the wicked men of the city surrounded the house. Pounding on the door, they shouted to the old man who owned the house, 'Bring out the man who came to your house so we can have sex with him' " (Judges 19:22 NIV). The old gentleman understood well what they had in mind and he, like

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Lot, years before, offered his daughter and the visitor's concubine for them to abuse and defile. The tradition of hospitality must have been very strong for one to take such an undesirable course. "The owner of the house went outside and said to them, 'No, my friends, don't be so vile. Since this man is my guest, don't do this disgraceful thing. Look, here is my virgin daughter and his concubine. I will bring them out to you now, and you can use them and do to them whatever you wish. But to this man, don't do such a disgraceful thing' " (Judges 19:23-24 NIV).

The men of Gibeah did take the concubine and raped her, an abhorrent, despicable sin to be sure. But the sin of homosexuality is here described as a vile, disgraceful thing. Nothing could be more revolting or repugnant to one who has respect for God's arrangement. It is inconceivable that people of our day who clamor for acceptance by society could approve of such conduct.

Paul discusses this subject a number of times in his writings: "Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised" (Romans 1:24-25).

The radical and blatant extreme of sexual impurity is seen in the passage which discusses homosexuality. The people who engaged in it were unabashed and shameless.

"Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their 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" (Romans 1:26-27).

It is incomprehensible that men of any sense or logic would argue that homosexuality is "constitutionally inherited" and that it is a different, but as good, life style as God's plan and pattern for marriage and the home comprised of husband and wife and children.

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I Corinthians 6:9-10, is translated by some scholars as "male prostitutes and homosexuals," and I Timothy 1:9-11 as "perverts [homosexuals]." In some countries this sinful action is elevated to a position of respectability and has been made legal. This same concession is sought by homosexuals in this country. Recently, I noticed in the newspaper an article which involved two women lesbians who undertook to procure a marriage license, and made strong effort to have such a relationship given judicial approval.

You wonder by what standard such people seek to live and conduct their lives. Whose standard is it? Who legislated its rules? By what authority is their standard established? Are the principles inculcated divine or human? Does each group have the freedom to establish its own guidelines? Whose is the correct model?

Let us take note of some things God has to say about this sin of homosexuality and the characteristics of it. From the verses we have already read, you may note something of the moral tone of the practice:

1. It is called licentiousness.
2. Such people are said to deny the lord.
3. They have no shame.

4. They are guilty of sexual morality.
5. They have gone after strange flesh.
6. It is called a perversion.
7. Those who practice it are said to be slaves of corruption.
8. Inherent in the word is the spirit of insolence.
9. It is called lust of uncleanness.
10. Peter brands it as lawless deeds and filthy conduct.
11. Those who are guilty have their understanding darkened.
12. They are alienated from God's way.
13. They are classified as ignorant.
14. They possess hardened hearts.
15. They reach a point of being past feeling, morality.
16. They think it strange you do not live in the same degree of dissipation.
17. They are called perverted men.
18. God's divine word calls it an abomination.
19. Those who were guilty of the sin were to be banished and put to death.

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20. Such sinners among God's children were to be cut off from their people.

These disgraceful passions and desires were common and accepted in the heathen world, Paul shows. So shameful were they that the apostles seem hesitant in discussing them. Perhaps there is no sin in the whole catalogue of crime that so deeply shows the depravity of man as that of *sodomy* or *homosexuality*—men with men and women with women. The choice of men in those days, and maybe today, was young boys.

The prevalence of it is seen in the words of Seneca who said that in his time, "it was practiced openly and without shame." It was an age of unparalleled immorality—like that of the antediluvians (Genesis 6:5).

Juvenal says that Agrippina, the empress herself, would leave the royal palace and serve in a brothel for sheer unsatiated lust. Society from top to bottom was riddled with crude and unnatural vice. Fourteen out of fifteen emperors were homosexuals.

Aristotle says that it was a reaching out after pleasure. The Stoics said it was a reaching out after pleasure which defies all reason.

Clement of Alexander said: "It is aiming at and reaching for what will gratify self—passionate desires for forbidden pleasure which makes men do nameless and shameless things. It is a kind of insanity which he would not practice had he not robbed himself of a sense of honor, prudence and decency." It is the way of one who has become completely immersed in the world and ceased to be aware of God at all.

This sin reaches far back into history, as is shown in this lesson. The houses of the male prostitutes (Sodomites) were destroyed by King Josiah (I Kings 14:24; 15:12; 22:46; II Kings 23:7). It was common among the Greeks and the Romans and the heathen of that day.

Is it better now? We live in a society where these sins are sanctioned, approved and even acclaimed. They find both religious and civil consent. The gratification of the flesh is

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described as a life style. One is exonerated because he is said to be born with these tendencies. It is commended, esteemed, embraced, for there are priests, pastors, preachers who commend it, embrace it and esteem it. There is social acquiescence and acceptance. The sin is wrong for many reasons and should be universally condemned.

1. It is wrong because it is unnatural. This is not how God made man and woman and not what He intended, therefore.
2. It is unseemly. The Lord Himself marks it as a indecent, naked shame infamous, lewd, debauchery, dissolute, profligacy. It is wrong because God said so, regardless of how many may feel about it.
3. It is wrong because woman was created to be the helper suitable to man.
4. It is wrong because it destroys the laws of procreation. In this relationship they are to be fruitful and multiply, else the human race would become extinct.
5. It is wrong because it destroys the family unit. For the proper rearing, development and happiness of the child, there must be a father and a mother. It is in this relationship where love, warmth, unselfishness, sharing, tolerance and generosity are learned and imparted.
6. It is wrong because there is no self restraint, no self control. This is the very heart of Christianity, and it may be said it is the very heart of intelligent and successful society.

Why did this evil, morally debased, repulsive, disgusting and contemptible condition exist in history? And why does it still exist? Whose standard is it that permits, encourages and accepts such a status? Here are the reasons:

1. People become a law unto themselves (Romans 2:14).
2. "Every man did [does] that which was right in his own eyes" (Judges 17:6; 21:25).
3. "The way of a fool is right in his own eyes" (Proverbs 12:15).
4. "There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death" (Proverbs 14:12; 16:25).
5. "Every way of a man is right in his own eyes" (Proverbs 21:2).
6. They change the truth of God into a lie (Romans 1:25).
7. "They have despised the law of the Lord" (Amos 2:4).

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8. With the flesh they serve the law of sin (Romans 7:25).
9. They commit abominations and are not ashamed (Jeremiah 8:12).

10. They have their own human standard and no regard for God's standard. When men become a law unto themselves, decide their own values, walk in their own paths, set their own goals, make their own judgments as to what is right and wrong, the country and the world end up in anarchy—that means "without rule" or law!.

## **There Is Hope For The Homosexual**

This is to say that the sin of homosexuality can be forgiven. There are some Bible requisites to that, however.

1. One must recognize that he is a sinner. He must be aware of his situation.
2. He must be willing to accept personal responsibility for his sinful condition. He cannot continue to blame God for making him as he is; nor can he blame the environment or his heredity. To extenuate one's self, blame is almost always placed upon the shoulders of another person.
3. He must have a genuine desire to change.
4. He can be helped in this new course of determination to do what is right by engaging the help of others. Such a person must have a very strong resolve, but he may need therapy.
5. He needs to become involved in helping others who have experienced his problem.
6. If he is an erring Christian, he needs to turn to God in prayer for forgiveness. And he needs the spiritual strength and support of fellow Christians.

## **Other Forms Of Licentiousness**

You have observed, doubtless, that the terms *licentiousness* and *lasciviousness* are closely related. Both words are used to translate the Greek New Testament word *aselgeia*. The English word *licentiousness* derives from the word *license* which originally means, "formal permission from a constituted authority to do a specified thing, as to carry on some business, drive a car, etc." But also means "intentional deviation from rule, convention, or fact; excessive or undue freedom, or liberty, especially licentiousness."

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One often assumes the prerogative to decide his own path in which he will walk and gives himself the *license* to say and do what pleases him or what satisfies his human desires and inclinations. Paul spoke of those who had "given themselves over to lasciviousness (*aselgia*), to work all uncleanness" (Ephesians 4:19). Peter spoke of those who "walked in lasciviousness, lusts, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries" (I Peter 4:3).

The English word *lasciviousness* means "inclined to lustfulness; wanton; lewd; arousing or inciting sexual desire. Expressing lust or lewdness." So, this term covers, as we have already seen, a multitude of sins—including often lying, cheating,

subterfuge, the searing of the conscience, living a life of hypocrisy which has to be a miserable kind of existence in the midst of his family.

## **Immodesty**

The Bible clearly imparts to us and instills within us that sexuality is good and beneficial in many ways, and the expression of that sexuality is right and proper and ethical within the appropriate context. While it is honorable and pure under the right circumstances, it is also very private and is to be discreetly disclosed in any relationship (as in business or as friends) outside of marriage and the home

It is not something to be exhibited and put on display in order to attract and tempt someone else. What one sees so often on TV, and in real life, on the beaches of our oceans and lakes and streets of our cities is a parade of the human body, a flaunting of one's physical attraction, for the purpose of manipulating and enticing others to lust and even deviant sexual overtures and proposals.

For these, and other reasons, immodesty is strongly denounced in the word of God. It is vigorously censured in both the Old and New Testaments and those who were guilty have been convicted for their misdeeds.

One of the most dramatic and pictorial instances of immodesty in the Scriptures is found in Genesis 38:14-15:Tamar "took off her widow's garments, covered herself with a veil and *wrapped herself*, and sat in an open place. ... When Judah saw her, he

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thought she was a harlot." It is not always the length of a woman's dress that marks her as indelicate and improper. It may be how she *wraps herself* that signifies obscenity and vulgarity. It is as common as the food we eat that one sees a person whose body is completely enveloped with clothing and whose flesh is screened from view, but who has so *wrapped herself/himself* that every feature of the body is distinctly in focus and accentuated to the point of being flagrantly indecorous.

What deepens the coarseness of the scene is the total absence of shame and the unabashed, unblushing and brazen promenade as if it were a first class stage show for children. The trouble with slacks which many women in our day wear in public is that are not *slack* and this seems exceedingly difficult for one to learn!

Western women's fashion a few years ago, and it seems to be returning to the arena, clad them in disgracefully short attire. There was no way to characterize it as modest. It is shocking and embarrassing. Women who wear swimsuits today that are little larger, if any, than a handkerchief are not just inappropriate or indiscreet but are bawdy and lewd. Many of the costumes for dancing and ice skating are little better. Grossly indecent, they fit in the category of salacious and wanton substance and direction of one's life.

## **Noah's Indecency**

Genesis 9:20-27 tells the shocking, scandalous story of Noah's immodesty. Drunk with wine, his sense of propriety was left behind and his pride in his personal sexuality was totally unremembered and had escaped the province of his will.

He lay naked in his tent. I do not know what Ham did to him. It just says: "When Noah awoke from his wine and knew what his youngest son had done to him." One translation says "when he found out what his youngest son had done to him."

The grammar suggests that Noah was passive and his son did something to him. It may be that he did no more than look upon his father's nakedness. Earlier in the story the writer said, "He drank of the wine and was drunk, and became uncovered in his tent." The King James Version renders it, "and he was un-

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covered within his tent." The crime was serious enough in the sight of God that a curse was placed upon Ham's posterity.

## **Bathsheba Bathes In Plain Sight Of David's Palace**

This story is related in II Samuel 11:1-5: "It happened in the spring of the year, at the time when kings go out to battle, that David sent Joab and his servants with him, and all Israel; and they destroyed the people of Ammon and besieged Rabbah. But David remained in Jerusalem. Then it happened one evening that David arose from his bed and walked on the roof of the king's house. And from the roof he saw a woman bathing, and the woman was very beautiful to behold. So David sent and inquired about the woman. And someone said 'Is this not Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?' "

"Then David sent messengers, and took her; and she came to him, and he lay with her, for she was cleansed from her impurity; and she returned to her house. And the woman conceived; so she sent and told David and said, 'I am with child.' " This sin of adultery, and the many sins that followed and were inseparably connected with it, is traceable directly to immodesty.

This is not to place the blame solely on Bathsheba, but that is where it started. She may not have intended to tempt David, but the fact is that she did, and the result was adultery, lying, drunkenness, deceit and an illegitimate pregnancy. I may add to that he murdered the woman's husband to carry out his unholy scheme. It is certainly likely that none of these heinous crimes would have occurred if Bathsheba had been modest enough to bathe in private.

A woman is not to exhibit and display her sexuality indiscriminately. God made her that way and it is beautiful but it is to be safeguarded and maintained exclusively for her lifetime partner. Her sexuality (and I may say, his) is not for public inspection. It is private, infinite and exclusive.

## Paul And Peter Address The Subject

"I also want women to dress modestly," said Paul to Timothy (I Timothy 2:9-10). He stressed that instead of placing emphasis on the outward person, it must be placed on the

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inward woman. She was told to fill her life with "good deeds, appropriate for women who profess to worship God."

"Do not let your beauty be that outward adorning of arranging the hair, of wearing gold, or of putting on fine apparel; but let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible ornament of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God" (I Peter 3:3-4). Even in today's world, this teaching becomes very evident. God wants his men and women to be modest in their dress and deportment. It may be that carelessness on the part of some women and their desire to appear attractive and desirable to the opposite sex induces them to go to these questionable, if not vulgar, lengths to explore the advances that such men are willing to take.

### **Rape: "And being stronger than she, he forced her."**

There are not enough ugly words in the dictionary to adequately describe the sin of rape. It is the vicious and depraved action of a degenerate, deviant and immoral villain. More that, it is an unnatural, impersonal, detached and cruel portrayal of one's sexuality. It has to be unnatural, for how could a man find the capability of penetrating a woman who is frightened, has absolutely no desire for such a relationship and protests the intrusion with every objection she can utter. It is an ungodly and selfish invasion of the privacy of another person.

A great many words come to my mind which help describe such a person: savage, barbarian, brute, monster, fiend, demon, hoodlum. I thought of including in the list *animal*, but that would not be appropriate for an animal breeds only when it is time to do so and for the purpose of fulfilling God's natural law of reproduction. It is a horrible and unlawful conquest of one's private domain and an encroachment unto a territory to which he has absolutely no right to enter. The Bible condemns the sin in no uncertain terms.

"Now Dinah the daughter of Leah, whom she had borne to Jacob, went out to see the daughters of the land. And when Shechem the son of Hamor the Hivite, prince of the country, saw her, he took her and lay with her, and violated her. ..." You will likely remember what followed. The sons of Jacob were so enraged it ultimately resulted in their plundering the city and killing every

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male in it. Their justification was, "Should he treat our sister like a harlot" (Genesis 34:1-31)? While these sons of Jacob were not justified in reciprocating as they did, a scheme filled with deceit, it shows what a vicious and monstrous crime *rape* is considered to be.

A tragic story of *rape* is related in II Samuel 13, where one of David's sons, Amnon, raped his half sister, Tamar. It is a lurid, frightful, and disgusting story, repulsive in every way. One reason the tale is so hideous is because of the deception and plotting that led to the invasion and transgression of the private sexual territory of this beautiful and pure young woman.

"After this Absalom the son of David had a lovely sister, whose name was Tamar; and Amnon the son of David loved her. Amnon was so distressed over his sister Tamar that he became sick; for she was a virgin. And it was improper for Amnon to do anything to her. But Amnon had a friend whose name was Jonadab the son of Shimeah, David's brother. Now Jonadab was a very crafty man. And he said to him, 'Why are you, the king's son, becoming thinner day after day? Will you not tell me?'

"Amnon said to him, 'I love Tamar, my brother Absalom's sister.' So Jonadab said to him, 'Lie down on your bed and pretend to be ill. And when your father comes to see you, say to him, 'Please let my sister Tamar come and give me food, and prepare the food in my sight, that I may see it and eat it from her hand.' Then Amnon lay down and pretended to be ill; and when the king came to see him, Amnon said to the king, 'Please let Tamar my sister come and make a couple of cakes for me in my sight that I may eat from her hand.'

"And David sent home to Tamar, saying, 'Now go to your brother Amnon's house, and prepare food for him.' So Tamar went to her brother Amnon's house; and he was lying down. Then she took flour and kneaded it, made cakes in his sight, and baked the cakes. And she took the pan and placed them out before him, but he refused to eat. Then Amnon said, 'Have everyone go out from before me.'

"And they all went out from him. Then Amnon said to Tamar, 'Bring the food into the bedroom, that I may eat from your

hand.' And Tamar took the cakes which she had made, and brought them to Amnon her brother in the bedroom. Now when she had brought them to him to eat, he took hold of her and said to her, 'Come, lie with me, my sister.' But she answered him, 'No, my brother, do not force me, for no such thing should be done in Israel. Do not do this disgraceful thing! And I, where could I take my shame? And as for you, you would be like one of the fools of Israel. Now therefore, please speak to the king, for he will not withhold me from you.' " However, he would not heed her voice; and being stronger than she, he forced her and lay with her.

"Then Amnon hated her exceedingly, so that the hatred with which he hated her was greater than the love with which he had loved her. And Amnon said to her, 'Arise, be gone!' So she said to him, 'No, indeed! This evil of sending me away is worse than the other that you did to me.' But he would not listen to her.

"Then he called his servant who attended him, and said, 'Here! Put this woman out, away from me, and bolt the door behind her.' Now she had on a robe of many colors, for the king's virgin daughters wore such apparel. And his servant put her out and bolted the door behind her. Then Tamar put ashes on her head, and tore her robe of many colors that was on her, and laid her hand on her head and went away crying bitterly. And Absalom her brother said to her, 'Has Amnon your brother been with you? But now hold your peace, my sister. He is your brother, do not take this thing to heart.' So Tamar remained desolate in her brother Absalom's house" (II Samuel 13:1-20).

You will recall that this affair caused dissension in the king's household—bitterness, separation and murder ensued. The ultimate outcome was the murder of Amnon, the attempted murder of David by Absalom and the eventual violent, fierce death of Absalom.

The language in the Old Testament upon the subject of *rape* was very clear, and not only was it objectionable to God but completely inadmissible for any of His children. He laid down readily understood laws regarding the crime and showed how severely it was to be punished. "But if a man finds a betrothed young woman in the countryside, and the man forces her and lies with her, then only the man who lay with her shall die"

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(Deuteronomy 22:25). The Lord continued his discussion of the case by saying that this is like that: "when a man rises against his neighbor and kills him, even so is this matter" (v. 26).

It is lamentable that in our day a man may be guilty of multiple rapes, and other crimes besides, and after a hearing and a trial which is a farce, he is set scot-free, able to roam the streets again. Swift and consistent punishment is what is direly needed in today's world if justice is to be served and our streets and homes made safe from such thugs and hoodlums. Such savage delinquents are worth nothing to society. They are a detriment and a drag, a scab on the body politic. Most of them have forfeited their right to rehabilitation.

I am in favor of educational programs designed to both prevent and correct this disease in our society. Moral and spiritual therapy are vital in this treatment. The Bible supports every effort to improve and reform these people, provided they are willing to correct, not just modify, their own behavior. But I also believe the Bible teaches that a man gives up, sacrifices his rights, who has attacked, raped and murdered a woman to satisfy his ungodly lust—whether sexual in nature or his hatred of women and his consequent male domination.

In the Old Testament, the divine writer, speaking for the Lord, said: "If a man finds a young woman who is a virgin, who is not betrothed, and he seizes her and lies with her, and they are found out, then the man who lay with her shall give to the young woman's father fifty shekels of silver, and she shall be his wife because he has humbled her, he shall not be permitted to divorce her all his day" (Deuteronomy 22:28-29).

To turn such a criminal loose today to repeat his crime is a travesty on society. It is not only inadvisable, but extremely dangerous for a woman to walk on the sidewalks of her neighborhood, for exercise or pleasure, day or night in any of our urban areas. The incidence of *rape* is rising at a phenomenal rate throughout our country and is frequently linked with other violent physical crimes.

If we used education and discipline as God directs, this problem would be solved almost overnight. The New Testament handles this sin by emphasizing that sexuality is private, exclusive,

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restricted and a personal, intimate act of love which is expressed voluntarily with a life time partner to whom one is totally committed

Listen to this charge given by an apostle: "Because of sexual immorality, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband. Let the husband render to his wife the affection due her, and likewise also the wife to her husband. The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. And likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. Do not deprive one another except with consent for a time, that you may give yourselves to fasting and prayer, and come together again so that Satan does not tempt you because of your lack of self control" (I Corinthians 7:2-5). Observe, as you read your New Testament, how God always speaks of the relationship of a man and a woman in the context of marriage and the home.

"Therefore I desire that the younger widows marry, bear children, manage the house, give no opportunity to the adversary to speak reproachfully. For some have already turned aside after Satan" (I Timothy 5:14-15).

"That they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed" (Titus 2:4-5).

"Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding [considerately], giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered" (I Peter 3:7).

The word translated *considerately* here comes from the word "knowledge of a special kind and relatively high character." But there is another word Peter used, *time*, in the husband's attitude toward and treatment of his wife and that word is *honor*. It means that he should cherish her as a precious possession.

So you can see that woman's sexuality (and a man's also, as to that matter) is not something public, but is to be used for a specific and definite relationship. It is narrow and fixed. It is so precise that you may be sure that it is to be used exclusively in

the are of love in the home. You may say that the husband has a monopoly on the sexuality of his wife, and the wife has a monopoly on the sexuality of her husband. And you may call this *restraint*. That is exactly what it is!

## **Incest — "No one is to approach any close relative"**

The definition today of *incest* is "sexual intercourse, cohabitation, or marriage between persons so closely related that marriage is legally forbidden." The word itself means impure. After the human race was well established on the earth, God laid down very strict laws regulating the periphery of marriage and the home. There were certain clear, distinct regulations which set boundaries. In Leviticus 18:6 (NIV), the Lord said: "No one is to approach any close relative to have sexual relations. I am the Lord." Then He proceeded to inform them what those limitations were and what the restrictions He stipulated encompassed.

The Israelites were prohibited to have sexual relations with a parent, child, step parent, sibling, stepsister or stepbrother, grandchild, half sister or half brother, aunt or uncle, daughter-in-law or son-in-law, mother-in-law or father-in-law. The punishment in many cases of incest was death. In other cases one was cut off from his people. Curses were pronounced upon Israel for such behavior (Deuteronomy 27:20-23).

Let me give an example or two that you may not misunderstand: "Cursed is the one who takes a bribe to slay an innocent person. And all the people say, 'Amen' "(v. 24)! Then he goes down the line in issuing this ban. He meant that they must learn and respect the fact that God had certain confines; and those who did not respect them were either slain or cut off from their people.

In this same list, Moses (quoting God) said: "Cursed is the one who lies with any kind of animal" (v. 21). This more fully treated and developed in the Old Testament but this should be sufficient to show God's tolerance of such coarse, vulgar, obscene, erotic sin. He was unforbearing and unindulgent in these sinister and filthy deeds. We need to pause occasionally to be reminded that *licentiousness* covers all these sins, although they may not be treated with the same detail as they are in the Old Testament.

But back to the topic of *incest*. One of the most graphic instances of this sin is found in Genesis 19:30-38. It is every descriptive, even in detail. Lot's daughters duped their father into having intercourse with each of them. I don't know whether he could be characterized as a victim. It seems to be that he was a chump and a sucker to permit himself to drink their wine until he was inebriated. How culpable was he under these circumstances? After they left Zoar, they settled in the mountains and lived in a cave. The daughters were convinced about having children, and so they arranged a schedule to get their father drunk and each of them lie with him. Both became pregnant by him and both bore sons. One of the sons became the father of the Moabites and the other the father of the Ammonites.

The writer does not discuss in this place the moral and ethical aspects of this experience, but subsequent history points out the insoluble tangled relationships between Moab and Ammon and Israel through the events of much of their national career. Before Jacob died, he gave some advise to his sons and charged them in the region of the development of their character. To Reuben, his firstborn, he said: "Reuben, you are my firstborn, my might and the beginning of my strength, the excellency of dignity and the excellency of power. Unstable as water, you shall not excel, because you went up to your father's bed; then you defiled it" (Genesis 49:3-4).

We see a clear cut case of *incest* in the New Testament—even in the church. A man in the church at Corinth was guilty of immorality by taking his father's wife. They seemed to be proud of their conduct. Paul was rather surprised that they were not filled with grief. Maybe their pagan background kept them from viewing this incestuous sin as being filthy and odious in the sight of God.

But to show how heinous it really was, here are some steps they were to take to keep from permeating and destroying the whole congregation: (1) Let him who has done this be removed from among you. (2) I have already pronounced judgment in the name of the Lord Jesus on the man who has done this thing. (3) You are to deliver this man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the soul may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. (4) Cleanse out the old leaven that you may be fresh dough. (5) But I wrote to you not to associate with anyone who bears the name

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of brother if he is guilty of immorality. (6) Drive out the wicked person from among you.

While living in another country, we had association with a young Christian girl who had been abused sexually by her father. Eventually she became pregnant by him. Sometime there after she left the church and I did not know of her whereabouts. I often wondered about two things: (1) Did we show her enough love and concern? Did we try to help and encourage her during this most difficult period in her life, and (2) what effect did this grievous sin committed against her by her father have upon her unfaithfulness to the Lord and His church? Some years ago, after returning from the mission field to the United States, a civil servant who was a Christian related to me the most unusual, and I hope uncommon, (weird) case of which I had ever heard.

There was a young Christian woman with three children who approached this Christian brother, who was working for the State in the Welfare Department, for some economic help, for she was having a very difficult time providing for her children. He knew her mother and her grandfather whom he had come to respect out of his belief that he was a Christian. Little helpful information could be drawn from the young woman concerning her circumstances and needs. After the death of the old man, the grandfather, he derived the morbid details of the story which unfolded gradually before him. Her grandfather had begotten her mother, and by her mother, his daughter, had sired the young woman of our story. Then by his granddaughter, who was also his daughter, he had fathered her three children! He had quietly threatened all of them with death if they divulged this uncivilized and unconscionable secret disgrace during his lifetime.

*Incest* is the degradation of the tenderness that is natural between those of consanguinity (relationship by blood, or family ties) into a shocking, egregious and flagrant moral character. It is the crime of sexual relation of persons within the degree of kinship forbidden by God (Leviticus 18:17; 20:14; II Samuel 13; Genesis 19:33; Genesis 35:22; II Samuel 16:22; I Corinthians 5:1; Genesis 38:15-16; Ezekiel 22:11; Matthew 14:3; Leviticus 20:21). *Incest* is far too common in our society today and is not held in extreme disdain by our justice system and not held in contempt and derision by the citizens of our country as it ought to be.

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Marriage, in the Old Testament, was forbidden between any person and a direct ancestor or a direct descendant. It carried not only a connotation of immorality, but there was confusion and befuddlement of the race resulting often in mental deficiency and physical damage. The calamitous impairment still exists in tightly knit communities which have existed over a long period of time without the introduction of new and different bloodlines. You may be sure that God still frowns upon this offensive and abhorrent evil. In the New Testament it is classified under the heading of *aselgeia—lasciviousness/licentiousness*. It is in the same category with murder, robbery and rape.

May we so teach and live that the line of demarcation between the church and the world, between the children of God and the children of Satan, will be clearly seen as a boundary across which the Christian refuses to walk.

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