

STUDY GUIDE



CHURCH NAME

WHY I AM NOT A CHRISTIAN

IS GOD ANTI GAY?

1 CORINTHIANS 6:9-11; MARK 7:20-23

06/25/2017

MAIN POINT

God loves and desires to save all types of sinners.

INTRODUCE

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

When was the last time you got really, really lost?

Where were you trying to go? Where did you end up instead? How did it happen?

What should you have done differently?

“Is God Anti-Gay?” is a common and controversial question. But there is usually a question behind the question. What does the Bible have to say about sex? Sex is God’s idea. It was not our invention but His gift. God gave us a means of reproduction that was not just functional, but deeply pleasurable. Sex is a sign of His goodness. Genesis 1–2 shows us that God is for sex. But it also shows us that sex is for marriage. The bible defines marriage specifically between one man and one woman. How does marriage fit in with this? In Mark 7, Jesus says that we are *all* heading in the wrong direction. We all need to change direction and line up with what He wants. And that means believing the gospel: the announcement that, through Jesus’ death and resurrection, we can be made right with God; that we are being offered a fresh start to begin to live as God always meant us to. This is His message. And it’s His message for all people. God’s message for gay people is the same as His message for everyone. Repent and believe. It is the same invitation to find fullness of life in God, the same offer of forgiveness and life-changing love.

READ AND REFLECT

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ 1 CORINTHIANS 6:9-11.

Is homosexuality greater than any other sin? How do you think most Christians would answer this question? How do you think most non-Christians would expect a Christian to answer this question?

Is homosexuality an unforgivable sin?

According to this text, no sin is unforgivable. Paul is very clear that people who are characterized by these behaviors—homosexuality, reviling, swindling, greed, and all the rest in the list—will not enter the kingdom of God. That means that if your life is marked by continual, unrepentant sin, you won't spend eternity with Jesus.

But he gives such wonderful news in verse 11.

Why might it be important for us to remember who we were before coming to Christ (v. 11)?

Why might doing so be particularly important when sharing the gospel with homosexuals?

Paul leads off saying, "And some of you used to be like this." The Corinthians were engaging in homosexual behavior. They were swindlers. They were greedy. They were adulterers. They were idolaters . . . But they were "washed . . . sanctified . . . justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God." They were forgiven, made clean from their sins, and set free to live a life in pursuit of Jesus. Paul says here that there is no sin too big for Jesus.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ MARK 7:20-23.

What types of sin did Jesus identify as beginning in the heart of a man? What is the connection between the heart and these actions?

If sin begins in the heart, what are some things we can do to protect our hearts from things that would harm them? How do you do this while avoiding the type of false righteousness the Pharisees upheld?

God is anti-sin and homosexuality is one sin among many. It is neither excusable nor more serious than other sins. We are all broken and can all find redemption. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus challenged the common understanding of the Law in His day. He equated anger with murder and adultery with murder. As the best interpreter of the Law, Jesus recognized that the essence of the Law is obedience at the level of the heart. The Pharisees could never seem to take this teaching to heart. All believers must take care of their hearts. We can do this positively by reading God's Word, praying to Him, and cultivating intimacy with Him.

Sexual immorality is one sinful behavior among many. What does this teach us about how to address this struggle?

Jesus reinforces the sexual ethics of Genesis 1–2. He characterizes *all* sexual activity outside of marriage as evil: "What comes out of a person is what defiles them. For it is from within, out of a person's heart, that evil thoughts come—sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly" (Mark 7:20-23). This list claims that *all sorts of evil* come from *inside* and defile a person.

APPLY

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

As we think about homosexuality from a biblical perspective, we have to discuss how to respond. How do we maintain a faithful witness in the face of incredible pressure to conform what we believe?

While being biblically faithful, how can we approach people who deal with same-sex attraction with grace and charity?

Do you know any people on a personal level that struggle with or embrace their same sex attraction? What would this look like if you don't have these relationships already? Why does the gospel call us to develop relationships with people who are very different than us?

PRAY

Thank God that He frees us from the power of sin through the work of Jesus. Thank Him that there is no sin that can't be forgiven. Pray that we would respond biblically to the culture's pressure to conform to an affirming view of same-sex marriage and that God would use us to speak grace and truth into the lives of members of the homosexual community.

COMMENTARY

1 CORINTHIANS 6:9-11

Believers should not be deceived into thinking that unbelieving judges (the unrighteous) and their slap-on-the-wrist verdicts about serious sin can render justice in the church. These people have no inheritance in God' s kingdom. Only believers, who are washed... sanctified, and justified, can rightly judge sins (v. 1). Paul's Corinthian readers would also take this admonition as a cause for asking themselves if their behavior matched that of "the unrighteous" or that of the "washed," the "sanctified," and the "justified."

MARK 7:20-23

Jesus listed 13 moral problems to illustrate His point about internal defilement. The first seven are plural and indicate repeated acts. Sexual immoralities includes all illicit sexual practices outside marriage. Evil actions is a term for maliciousness. The last six evils are all singular, indicating attitudes. Stinginess is literally "the evil eye." It refers to jealousy, envy, covetousness, and a grudging attitude. Blasphemy includes slander of others (cp. 2Tim 3:2). The word for pride refers to exalting oneself above others. Foolishness is lack of moral judgment.