

Homosexuality: Sin, Disorder, or Something Else?

written by Tim Jennings, M.D. | January 15, 2010



I would like to thank you for helping me understand the character of God better. I want to ask a question regarding homosexuality. I believe it is wrong and an abomination in the eyes of God, but I have been told

that homosexuality is a psychiatric disorder due to some abnormalities in the neurotransmitters. Is this true? Or is a result of a flawed character?

Thanking You, R

The Bible is quite clear that God designed humanity in the Garden of Eden, without sinfulness, or any biological defect with one male and one female forming a unit called “man.”

- When God created man, he made him in the likeness of God. He created them male and female and blessed them. And when *they* were created, *he called them “man.”* Gen 5:1,2

- So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. Gen 1:27

Some confuse “man” with maleness, but in God’s design it takes both “male” and “female” to make “man” – the image of God.

Satan wants to destroy the image of God in man and will attack humanity in any way he can. Satan attacks God’s character with lies and works to replace love in our hearts with fear and selfishness. But Satan also has attacked all of God’s creation. As the scripture says, all nature groans under the weight of sin (Romans 8:20-22). This means biological defects have entered the world including the human gene pool.

Everything that deviates from God’s original design is a result of sin and in some way misrepresents God. However, not everything that deviates from God’s original design is sin. For instance, God designed Adam and Eve to be “fruitful and multiple.” Today some people are born “sterile” incapable of having children. This is a deviation from God’s design, which has resulted because of sin in the world and fails to represent God as accurately as He designed (as God can create life and such individuals cannot procreate life), yet such a deviation in itself is not sin.

The disciples asked Jesus,

“Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” “Neither this man nor his parents sinned,” said Jesus, “but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life.” John 9:2,3.

Today, because of sin damaging God’s creation, there are many individuals born with biological defects not of their choosing. Maybe you heard the worldwide news coverage last year of Caster Semenya. She is the South African athlete that won gold medals in track at the world track competition. But after her win it was discovered she has a disorder known as Androgen Insensitivity Syndrome (AIS). What this means is she is genetically XY (male) yet at birth appeared to be a healthy female and was raised as a female her entire life. How did this happen?

Normally, women have two X chromosomes (XX) and men have an X and a Y (XY). During reproduction women can only donate an X chromosome because that is all they have. Men donate either an X or a Y chromosome. If a Y chromosome is donated the embryo will normally develop testes and become a male child. The testes will produce a hormone called antimüllerian hormone (AMH), which prevents the vagina and uterus from developing. The testes also produce testosterone which normally causes the labia to become the scrotum and the clitoris to become the penis.

But in order for testosterone to have its effect on these organs and the rest of the body, there must be a receptor that recognizes testosterone and responds to it. This receptor is coded on the X chromosome. The problem with AIS is that the gene that codes for the testosterone receptor is defective so even though there are testes producing the proper hormones there are no receptors to see the testosterone so the XY baby is born a healthy baby “girl.” She is given a female birth certificate and raised her entire life as a female. All governments in the world recognize the right of these women to marry men. Yet because of AMH these women do not have a uterus or full vagina and are sterile. This is clearly a deviation from God’s design that results from sin, yet itself is not sin.

There is another condition called Swyer syndrome. In this syndrome no gonads form at all. Therefore,

an XY (male) embryo doesn't have testes to produce either AMH or testosterone so these babies are born healthy little (XY) baby girls with vaginas, uterus, fallopian tubes but no ovaries. They are genetic males yet are physical females. These individuals are sterile as they have no ovaries or testes, yet because they have a uterus they can become pregnant by implantation of a donated embryo. At least four cases have occurred in which such (XY) women have received donated embryos and become pregnant and given birth to healthy babies. All governments recognize the legal right of such individuals to marry men.

There are numerous biological conditions, such as these, which has altered God's original design and are a result of sin in the world, but in themselves are not sin. Just like being born blind. These conditions include:

- 5-alpha reductase deficiency
- AIS
- Aphallia
- Clitoromegaly
- Congenital adrenal hyperplasia
- Gonadal dysgenesis
- Hypospadias
- Kallmann syndrome
- Klinefelter syndrome
- Micropenis
- Ovo-testes
- Progestin induced virilisation
- Swyer syndrome
- Turner syndrome
- Cryptorchidism
- 17-beta-hydroxysteroid dehydrogenase deficiency
- Mosaicism

According to the intersex society of North America 1-2% of live births have some form of sexual ambiguity and 0.1-0.2% of live births have defects severe enough to require medical intervention.

- The question then is - What determines male and female?
- Chromosomes?
- Genitalia?
- Mental orientation, identity/individuality?
- Behavior?

What does this mean?

- All of these defects are a result of sin damaging this creation - but that does not mean they are active sin.
- Man looks on the outward appearance God looks on the heart (1Sam 16:7)
- It is not our place to judge others. We don't know their circumstances. (Matt 7:1,2)

Our responsibility as representatives of the gospel of Jesus Christ is to promote the truth about God's character of love in word and deed. If we meet a homosexual we should treat them like Christ treated the prostitute - with love, kindness, patience and grace. It is not our responsibility to convict another

person of sin, that is the job of the Holy Spirit. Our job is to reveal Christ so clearly and fully that people are drawn to Him and He will change their hearts. And when the heart changes then any inappropriate behavior will change as well.