I’m not the first one to point out that the discussion regarding sexuality from the Biblical perspective has often been an exchange of vitriolic name-calling. The adage, "Ridicule is not an argument" seems to be pertinent. There are people on both sides of this debate who seem more interested in shouting than listening - let alone giving reasoned cases. This article in no way seeks to vilify anyone and does not endorse any acts of hatred.

For those who take a rather low view of Scripture, the Biblical statements on sexuality are, to them, outdated and therefore irrelevant. Not surprisingly, these folk also dismiss other statements by Scripture about the creation of Adam and Eve, the Fall of mankind into sin, the virgin birth/deity/physical resurrection of Christ and the absolute necessity of turning to Him in faith and repentance for salvation, as also out-dated and written by fallible men from a perspective of scientific ignorance.
There are others who also claim to be Christian and rather than take this liberal theological view of Scripture, they interpret Scripture through a Post-Modern lens and claim that homosexuality and Christianity are perfectly compatible. I will examine both sets of arguments and compare it to what the Bible teaches.

As a pastor, I am aware that there are many for this topic is not merely theoretical. For you it may be very personal. Perhaps you are torn. On the one hand you are battling with desires which on the other hand you find Scripture not condoning. You may be "battling" precisely because you feel the tension. This exposition may hopefully strengthen you in your battle.

**HOW WE INTERPRET THE BIBLE**

The Scripture declares that it is inspired by the Holy Spirit (2Tim. 3:16) as He moved upon men to write down His revelation (1Peter 1:10-12; 2Peter 1:21). Jesus affirmed the Scriptures as the Word of God (eg. Luke 22:37). Because of this, we affirm the inerrancy of Scripture since it's Divine Author can not be mistaken. Most of the objections raised against Biblical Inerrancy come from interpretations of Scripture, not the Scriptures themselves. The classic case, still cited by some as an objection to Biblical Inerrancy, is "Geocentrism" (that the Universe revolves around the earth), which at one point, was declared by the Roman Catholic Church as "what the Bible taught." Copernicus and Galileo observed that the Sun was actually the centre of our solar system ("Heliocentrism") and this caused some to doubt the Bible's inerrancy. But what really was at stake was not the inerrancy of Scripture, but the interpretation of it by the Papacy. There are expressions in Scripture that are perspective metaphors (such as, "the rising of the sun") which have mistakenly been interpreted by some as wooden-literal statements.

Therefore, we are well advised to follow four simple classic principles of Biblical interpretation when determining what a Scriptural passage means-
1. Because Scripture is inspired by God it is reasonable to assume that it should therefore be consistent. Thus, no Scripture verse or passage should be interpreted to contradict the overall message of Scripture.

2. Because Scripture claims to be the sufficient revelation from God to mankind (no other book is needed to explain Scripture) we should expect that the Scriptures will interpret themselves. That is, Scripture interprets Scripture.

3. Because the Scriptures where written to a particular audience in a particular time and place under either the Old or New Covenant, the occasion of the Scripture should inform the reader of the context of the specific Scripture in view. For example, it helps to know that the first Epistle to the Corinthians was written to a Greek audience around 55AD to address issues of immorality and disunity.

4. Because the Scriptures intend to communicate something rather than anything, it should be assumed that the author's intended meaning will be likely understood by the original audience therefore it is the reader's mission to discover the intended meaning of a passage, not merely the possible meaning of a passage.

THE TELEOLOGY OF SEXUALITY

“Telos” is the Greek word for purpose. Teleology is the study of a thing’s purpose. This involves considering a thing’s design. When it comes to sexuality three things are immediately apparent-
1. Gender distinction is intrinsically involved

2. It is the means of procreation

3. Its expression is a behaviour not an identity.

GENDER
Human sexuality is intrinsically linked to gender. Gender forms a defining aspect of a person’s identity. Being either a woman or a man is a major component of who we are. It affects our perspective, our emotional needs, our ability to empathise, our instincts. When it comes to sexuality, the Bible says nothing about orientation. It assumes that a person’s gender is the primary factor of that person’s sexuality. This is hardly disputed. However, since it is now known that there is no genetic, chromosomal, hormonal (or any other biological contribution) to account for same-gender sexual preference, some have attempted to broaden the definition of gender to include up to 7 categories (not the 2 of male or female) by asserting: Lesbian, Homosexual, Bi-Sexual, Transgendered, Bestial, should also be referred to as gender categories. Those who attempt to marry this idea with what the Bible says, have devised a remarkably creative means for doing this. They dispute that God created people either male or female. Instead, they claim, God created people male and female and therefore a person “could be anywhere on that continuum.”

¶

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

But applying the four basic principles of Biblical interpretation mentioned at the outset, this interpretation becomes impossibly ridiculous. The Bible knows nothing of the nonsensical notion that there are more than two categories of gender.

The teleology of gender as it relates to sexuality is found in the marriage union where what is lacking in a man is complemented by what is present in a woman. To “wed” is to take two complementary things and make one new thing. In metal work, when two complementary metals are merged it is referred to as “wedding” metals and the result is an alloy which is called a “marriage of metals”. If two identical metals are merged together, the result is not a new metal (“alloy”) it is just more of the same.
Much could be said about the ‘image of God in man’ ("imago dei") by examining the various ideas about what this means. Dr C. Jim Collins of Covenant Theological Seminary (St. Louis) lists three broad possibilities of what this expression could mean [page 94].

1. Resemblance View
2. Representative View
3. Relational View

Dr Collins writes about the image of God in mankind -

Some suppose that this means that human beings will be like God in some respects, such as intellectual, moral, and aesthetic experience. We will call this the resemblance view. This was once the most common interpretation among Christians and Jews, but nowadays two others are more common. Some theologians today think that the image of God refers to the way that humans are appointed to rule the creation on God's behalf, since verse 26 goes on to say, "and let them have dominion"; we will call this the representative view. Others are struck by the way in which the fulfillment (v.27) describes human beings as "male and female," and conclude that it is male and female together, or more broadly, humans in community, that functions as the image of God. We will call this the relationship view ... Finally, Genesis seems to suggest that the image is transmitted by procreation."


What Dr Collins is at least saying is that mankind (male and female) bear the image of God individually to a degree but more fully when in a procreative union. It is the union of a man and woman in covenant with each other before God ("marriage") that replicates the Triune image of God.

The image of God in mankind enables that image to be transmitted through procreation. The sexual union of a man and woman teleologically involves procreation. Professor J. Budziszewski puts it this way-
“...there is something missing in the man that must be provided by the woman, and something missing in the woman that must be provided by the man. This is most obvious in the physical dimension...Each of us can perform every vital function by himself, except one. The single exception is procreation...The union of opposites is the only possible realization of their procreative potential...Even more remarkable is that the complementarity of wife and husband does not end with biology.”

"What We Can't Not Know", Ignatius, 2011, page 96-97

BEHAVIOUR

Sexuality is not to be confused with gender. Gender contributes to identity. Sexuality is intrinsically linked to behaviour. That is, our sexuality is determined by how we act, not by our preferential desires. The act of sex is intentionally restricted to marriage because it is an expression of the deepest intimacy between a man and a woman and therefore demands the highest commitment. This idea runs counter to the anti-biblical notion that sex is merely a physical act.

¶ There’s more to sex than mere skin on skin. Sex is as much spiritual mystery as physical fact. As written in Scripture, “The two become one.”

1Cor. 6:16 [The Message Bible]

To participate in a sex act outside of marriage is to go beyond what God’s Word authorises. The act of sex is restricted to the “marriage bed” and this must be kept “holy”. Sexual activity with someone you are not married to is categorised as sexual immorality in the Bible. More specifically when it is without marriage it is identified as fornication and when it is beyond marriage it is identified as adultery.

Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous.

Hebrews 13:4

There are clear constraints and restraints on sexual activity given in the Old Covenant, particularly in Leviticus 18 where it forbids 6 categories of immoral sexual behaviour. These are-

(i) Incest (Lev. 18:7-17)
(ii) Fornication (Lev. 18:19)
(iii) Adultery (Lev. 18:20)
(iv) Paedophilia (Lev. 18:21)
(v) Homosexuality (Lev. 18:22)
(vi) Bestiality (Lev. 18:23)
History reveals that there have always been dissenters to these sexual prohibitions. But future history may marvel at how vociferous opponents to these restrictions are in our day. There are very vocal advocates for incest today who promote father-daughter “love”. Hollywood clearly promotes fornication and even adultery. The push to decriminalise paedophilia by movements promoting “man-boy” “love” is bewildering. Those promoting homosexuality have been the most organised of these protestors. And even Ethicists such as Prof. Peter Singer are advocating for bestiality to be considered “normal”.

Homosexual advocates who attempt to harmonise the Bible with their lifestyle do so largely by regarding-

**OBJECTION 1.** Old Testament prohibitions regarding homosexuality relate to idolatrous worship, not that homosexuality is wrong in itself.

It is clearly the case that the nations whom God expelled from Canaan were practising both idolatry and male-to-male sodomy.

¶ “Do not make yourselves unclean by any of these things, for by all these the nations I am driving out before you have become unclean, and the land became unclean, so that I punished its iniquity, and the land vomited out its inhabitants.

*Lev. 18:24-25*

But it is utterly false to consider that this sexual misconduct was only immoral because at times it was done as an act of pagan worship. The prohibition against homosexual acts is consistent throughout the Bible and is no where condemned merely because it was practised by idolaters. On the contrary, the Prophet Jeremiah in describing the parlour state of godly devotion within Jerusalem denounces those who worshiped Yahweh in the Temple and had yet turned the city into “Sodom” (Jer. 23:14). Homosexual activity mocks the divinely ordained biological teleology - that is, a man’s body is simply not biologically designed for male-to-male sexual ‘intercourse’. It utterly mars the theological truth behind the teleology of sexual intimacy because it is designed to be an expression of the Triune God in intimate complementary (not sameness) union.

**OBJECTION 2.** The case of Sodom & Gomorrah was for inhospitality, not homosexuality.

This novel interpretation is based on a misunderstanding of the much later comments by the prophet Ezekiel.
Behold, this was the guilt of your sister Sodom: she and her daughters had pride, excess of food, and prosperous ease, but did not aid the poor and needy.

Ezek. 16:49

The idea is promoted that when God sent His angels to Sodom and Gomorrah, the men of these cities were inhospitable to these holy visitors - and it was for this inhospitality that God destroyed them (Gen. 19). The problems with this idea are immediately obvious. Firstly, God declared that it for their “abominations” that He was to judge them. The Bible only lists a handful of things as “abominations” or “utterly detestable” and inhospitality is not one of them - but homosexual acts are. This declaration from God was made before He sent His angels to Sodom.

Secondly, the Divinely inspired account in Second Peter plainly says that Sodom’s judgment was for their sexual immorality not their inhospitality.

if by turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to ashes he condemned them to extinction, making them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly; and if he rescued righteous Lot, greatly distressed by the sensual conduct of the wicked (for as that righteous man lived among them day after day, he was tormenting his righteous soul over their lawless deeds that he saw and heard); then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment until the day of judgment, and especially those who indulge in the lust of defiling passion and despise authority. ¶ Bold and willful, they do not tremble as they blaspheme the glorious ones,

2Pet. 2:6-10

Added to this is that the name “Sodom” forever became associated in the Bible with immorality - not inhospitality.

just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities, which likewise indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural desire, serve as an example by undergoing a punishment of eternal fire.

Jude 7

OBJECTION 3. Jesus said nothing against homosexuality.

This is a sometimes heard argument by those trying to assert that Jesus tacitly affirmed homosexuality. But it's a very dangerous argument for those advocating for the compatibility of Christianity and the homosexual lifestyle since it attempts to rely on silence as its main proof. If this was granted (which it shouldn't be) similar unwelcome arguments could also be made such as Jesus was silent on rape ... Jesus was silent on bestiality ... Jesus was silent on Gay-bashing ... and so on.

Jesus stated that sexual immorality would "defile" a person.
For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander. These are what defile a person. But to eat with unwashed hands does not defile anyone."

Matt. 15:19

What He meant, and what His audience would have understood Him to mean, was what the Law defined as sexual immorality (which we have noted from Leviticus 18) which included homosexual activity. The only sexual union sanctioned in Scripture is the one affirmed by Christ-

He answered, “Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, ‘Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’? So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.”

Matt. 19:4-6

OBJECTION 4. Paul’s condemnation of homosexuality was a) directed at pagan worship practices; b) uninspired homophobia.

It is argued that Paul’s statements in Romans 1 are directed as Pagan worship practices not at homosexual activity. There are several immediate problems with this misconstruing of what the Text says. Firstly, Paul refers to sexual immorality - name homosexual activity - as the result of not honouring God and His created design.

Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things.¶ Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.

Rom. 1:22-25

What Paul has in mind here is God’s created order or Teleology (the purpose of a created thing). To reject God as Creator is to reject God’s claim as Sovereign over His created order and to mock the purpose that He has designed for His Creation. As a result of this rejection of both the Creator and His claim over His creation, mankind goes further into sin. In this instance, sin manifests as distorted sexual passions -
¶ For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error.

Rom. 1:26-27

Of course many, if not most, homosexual activists acknowledge that this is indeed what the New Testament teaches. For those activists who persist in trying to marry homosexual activity with Christianity they are left to adopt a very liberal method of reading the Bible and selectively regard some parts of Scripture as inspired and others parts as not inspired. But the New Testament affirms that Paul's writings were almost immediately recognised as inspired “Scripture” -

...Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, as he does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters. There are some things in them that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures.

2Peter 3:15-16

OBJECTION 5. Jude says that it is sin to express yourself sexually against the nature God has given you, and calls is "going after strange flesh".

The King James Version translates herteros sarx as “strange flesh”. The Homosexual activist, attempting to argue that this is the sin of a person born homosexual going against “their” nature and becoming heterosexually active is then pursuing what is to them “strange flesh”.

just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities, which likewise indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural desire, serve as an example by undergoing a punishment of eternal fire.

Jude 7

But this is clearly not what the text is saying as the context makes clear. What was “strange” (Greek: “heteros”) for the men of Sodom and Gomorrah was to be sexually active with other men! (Some have pointed out that heteros would also apply to their lusting after the angelic visitors to Sodom but it is clear from the text that they did not know these were angelic visitors.) The context of the original passage from Genesis 19 does not lend itself to the idea that the sin of the men of Sodom was that they went against their supposed homosexual orientation and pursued heterosexual unions - on the contrary - their attempt to rape their heavenly visitors is proof they were acting out their same-gender sexual attraction.
OBJECTION 6. The Biblical prohibitions against homosexuality are outdated and scientifically ignorant about the genetic predisposition of sexual orientation.

This idea is promoted almost without challenge. But the very simple response to it is that there is no genetic predisposition to homosexuality. The complementary simple response is that the moral code of Scripture does not have an expiry date - especially since all of the moral code is repeated in the New Testament with no exceptions. Some people point out that penalties prescribed in the Old Testament for breaking the moral code are not repeated in the New Testament (such penalties as stoning to death) therefore the moral code itself must not be valid today. This was famously stated by President Obama in his original Presidential Campaign (something I have addressed here). But this confuses the civil penalties of a Theocratic State with the moral code itself. While the penalties for breaking the moral code have not been reiterated in the New Testament, the moral code itself has most certainly been reiterated. It is just plain wrong to claim that the Bible is out-dated when it comes to science or morality.

OBJECTION 7. Jesus actually endorsed the Roman pedophile who's boy-lover was dying by healing his young lover.

This is a recent argument offered by homosexual activists attempting to compatibilise homosexual activity with the requirements of Jesus Christ. It is the idea that when Jesus healed the Roman Centurion's servant, it was actually the Roman Centurion's “boy-lover”. By healing the servant, it is argued, Christ was actually affirming the homosexual union between the two men. This wickedly imaginative twisting of the text has little to offer in any way of support for this idea except that the same Greek for boy used of a servant is the same Greek word for boy used to describe the victim of a paedophile. I have elaborated more fully on the reasons why this view is utterly false and actually blasphemous at http://www.findingtruthmatters.org/articles/the-gay-gospel/.

SEXUAL IDENTITY

It is one of the most heavily promoted ideas of the homosexual activists that people are born irrevocably same-gender attracted. But the New Testament dismisses this false notion-

¶ Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived! The sexually immoral, idolaters,
adulterers, passive homosexual partners, practicing homosexuals, 1Cor. 6:10 thieves, the greedy, drunkards, the verbally abusive, and swindlers will not inherit the kingdom of God. (NET Version) 1Cor. 6:11 And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.(ESV)

1Cor. 6:9

The New Testament states emphatically that the Holy Spirit can bring cleansing and sanctification from sexual misconduct. You may feel trapped in and even condemned for your sexual identification. There is hope. You can be forgiven, cleansed and made new by the Spirit of Christ.

Sexuality is designed by God. Our Creator has designed that this life-giving intimacy is also an expression of love. Love always involves submission. Through sexual intimacy a husband surrenders to his wife and a wife surrenders to her husband. Without willing mutual submission, sexual activity is merely about someone’s lustful gratification or quest for power over another. This is why rape is such a heinous violation because it is the very opposite of love since it is not based on mutual submission or willing surrender. It is also why sexual immorality in its various forms is so destructive because it is not a celebration of love but it becomes a misguided quest for acceptance, affirmation and approval. These are legitimate human needs, but sexual activity should never be the source of satisfying them. As a very wise Catholic priest said recently, “Every time a man has sex with his fiancée he is conditioning her to think that it is OK to have sex with someone she is not married to.” And as our society is being lulled into ignoring what their consciences and plain sense tell them, homosexual activity is not only considered immoral in the Bible, it's consequences reveal that it is also against the Natural Law. Peter Pilt (http://peterpilt.org/2012/09/06/the-relational-and-medical-facts-that-need-to-be-part-of-the-gay-marriage-discussion/) notes in a Master’s Thesis on the subject-

“Sexual relationships between members of the same sex expose gays, lesbians and bisexuals to extreme risks of sexually transmitted diseases (STD’s), physical injuries, mental disorders and even a shortened lifespan”. According to Dr Diggs, high levels of promiscuity among homosexuals lead to "a greatly increased likelihood of contracting HIV/AIDS, syphilis and other STD's", while in relation to physical health, "common sexual practices among gay men lead to numerous STD’s and physical injuries, some of which are virtually unknown in the heterosexual population. Lesbians are also at higher risk of STD’s (and) diseases that may be transmitted during lesbian sex…"

Summarizing Dr Diggs conclusions -
There are high rates of psychiatric illnesses, including depression, drug abuse and suicide attempts among gays and lesbians.

He says lifespan among homosexual men may be reduced by up to 20 years, while monogamy, meaning long-term sexual fidelity, is rare in GLB (Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual) relationships, particularly among gay men.

According to Dr Diggs, “Anal intercourse is the sine qua non of sex among gay men…the fragility of the anus and rectum make anal-genital intercourse a most efficient manner of transmitting HIV and other infections.”

SOURCE: http://www.catholiceducation.org/articles/homosexuality/ho0075.html

The damaging consequences of unnatural sexual activity are rarely discussed. As Professor J. Budziszewski writes, “...consequence is not the reason the act is wrong; it only declares its wrong and disciplines us for committing it.” (What We Can’t Not Know, page 105).

“So God gave us rules to regulate how we approach the good he gives us...We have rules not because our desires are wrong, but because they are strong.”

Thomas Williams, FOLLOWING PRINCE CASPIAN, page 46

The Creator has designed us to find physical pleasure in the act of sex. For men, this is powerfully physical and then emotional. For women this is powerfully emotional then physical. This complementary union of physical and emotional satisfaction serves as a type of relationship glue that draws on the strengths of maleness and femaleness and unites a man and a woman in a holy union.

Even within a marriage, a man could act in an unloving way toward his wife if he forces himself onto her when she is unwilling. The Bible instructs that sexual intimacy be grounded in mutual submission exclusively within marriage-

*The husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights, and likewise the wife to her husband. For the wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. Likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does.*

1Cor. 7:3-4

Sexuality is a very sacred and precious gift from the Creator. The Enemy of our souls has deceived many into thinking that it is merely a physical act and that every sexual urge must be legitimate. The Enemy has also beguiled some people into thinking that their desire for love, acceptance, approval, and affirmation can only come from a sexual connection with another person. This is not what our sexuality was designed for. The Enemy has also lied to many by convincing them that Christianity, especially those who have a high regard for the Bible, has taught sexuality is dirty, sinful, or even evil. But this is not true. In fact, it absolutely not true - that is, the Bible teaches that sexuality is a wonderful gift with a wonderful purpose of celebrating love through
mutual surrender and procreation which is a powerful expression of the image of God in mankind. It is enhanced by submitting first to Christ as Lord of your soul.

“All pleasures are meant for our delight, but no pleasure is safe without Christ. The principles of Christianity remove the danger and enhance the joy. As Susan said to Lucy after the wild dance in the forest, “I wouldn’t have felt safe with Bacchus and all his wild girls if we’d met them without Aslan.”

“I should think not,” Lucy replied.”

_Thomas Williams, FOLLOWING PRINCE CASPIAN, page 46_ 
(citing C.S.Lewis, PRINCE CASPIAN, page 133)

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Christianity is about surrender to Christ. Utter surrender. We surrender our ‘desires’, our ‘inclinations’, and our bodies. For some people who sincerely want to follow Christ yet struggle with their sexual identity, this typically means a life of celibacy. For them, the cost-benefit-ratio is weighted toward honouring Christ rather than satisfying their desires because they understand that sexual expression is not merely physical, but is intrinsically spiritual and has a direct bearing on how they represent God's image in them. For those battling with a same-gender sexual attraction who can not bring themselves to accept the distortions of the clear Biblical teaching on sexual purity, there is no simplistic relief to their battle. And for these folk, it will be a battle. But it’s a battle worth having for the sake of conscience and integrity.

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17th September 2012
www.findingtruthmatters.org

This article may be found at -
http://www.findingtruthmatters.org/articles/theologyofsexuality/