

Inspired Bible Reading
Session 3: The New Testament

How we talk is important. We must remember that we are not only discussing texts and ideas, we are also discussing people and a matter very central to their identity as personhood. *Whether you know it or not, those people are in this room and represented by people in this room. We will conduct our conversations accordingly.*

Due to the nature of the texts in this session and issues related to them, tonight's session will likely include the most detailed or explicit language of the series, and may be uncomfortable for some.

1. Romans 1: 24-27
 - a) On the surface:
 - i) Romans 1: 16 "For I am not ashamed of the gospel; it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith."
 - ii) Romans 2: 1 "Therefore you have no excuse, whoever you are, when you judge others; for in passing judgment on another you condemn yourself, because you, the judge, are doing the very same things."
 - b) Digging deeper:
 - i) χρῆσις: Often translated "relation" or "intercourse." Literally "use." NO mutuality indicated – "use" sex like "use" food. No gender implied. Economics/household management issue: how do I best "use" the resources available to me? Greek answer: correct use is "prudently, with self-control, decently, and orderly."¹ Correct use synonymous to natural use. Problem is inordinate desire, not misplaced desire.
 - ii) ἐρως: "eros" critiqued by philosophy of time by same outline Paul uses: desire (vs 1: 24), passion (1: 26), inflame (1: 27), appetite (1: 27), error (1: 27). Unquenchable flame was one common metaphor for erotic love, which was result when natural use turned to unnatural.²
 - iii) Romans 1: 18-32: setting for discussion is God's anger and punishment. God has been slighted by those who do not recognize God's authority, and thus have not shown God appropriate honor. The punishment is for these people, then, to be dishonored – by their passions and the acting out of them.

2. 1 Corinthians 6: 9-10
 - a) On the surface:
 - i) 1 Corinthians 6: 12 "'All things are lawful for me,' but I will not be dominated by anything."
 - ii) 1 Corinthians 11: 4-5 "Any man who prays or prophesies with something on his head disgraces his head, but any woman who prays or prophesies with

¹ Stobaeus, *Anthology* 2.102.20-25 in Frederickson, David, *Natural and Unnatural Use in Romans 1: 24-27 in Homosexuality, Science, and the Plain Sense of Scripture*. David L. Balch, Ed. Wm. B Eerdmans, 2000. P. 202

² Frederickson, pp. 207-215.

her head unveiled disgraces her head – it is one and the same thing as having her head shaved.”

- b) Digging deeper:
 - i) πόρνοι: here “fornicators,” could be any number of sexual immoralities.
 - ii) μαλακοζ: “soft.” Appears in list of *active* deeds. Men *too* interested in sex (even with wife) considered “soft,” as well as grown men willing to be penetrated (female’s role). Aristotle connected “soft” with excess or luxury.³ (Term also shows up in 1 Timothy 1: 9-10) Used it to mean, “one without a moral compass.” Beginning with the King James version in 1612 started to be translated as “effeminate.”
 - iii) αρσενοκοιτηζ: Paul first extant source of term. Literally means “man bed.” It is believed Paul coined the term by taking these two words from the Leviticus passages (studied last week) and putting them together. Future lists of similar vices include it as a reference to one who has been given over to ερωζ (see above) and in the loss of self control also hurts and disgraces others (younger male, disgraced by being penetrated).⁴

3. The issue of pederasty

- a) Socially acknowledged, romantic relationship in ancient Greece.
- b) Between an adult male (the erastes) and a younger male (the eromenos). Ideal seems to have been adult in mid- to late-twenties, and a boy who was past puberty but no older than 18.
- c) “The principal cultural model for free relationships between citizens.”⁵
- d) “There is a certain kind of sexual relationship which was considered by many Greeks to be very important for the cohesion of the city: sexual relations between men and youths. Such relationships were taken to play such an important role in fostering cohesion where it mattered – among the male population – that Lycurgus even gave them official recognition in his constitution for Sparta.”⁶ Dawson, *Cities of the Gods*, p. 193. See also George Boys-Stones, “Eros in Government: Zeno and the Virtuous City,” *Classical Quarterly* 48 (1998), 168–174: (p. 169).
- e) Romans accepted pederasty, but only in situations where the relationship was inherently unequal.
 - i) Roman citizens must maintain their masculinity, which meant they took the active (penetrating) role
 - ii) Their partner could not be their equal in any way, and therefore was usually a prostitute or slave, and almost always someone who was not a Roman citizen.
 - iii) Domination and exploitation became hallmarks of these relationships.

³ Ibid., pp. 218-220.

⁴ Ibid., pp. 220-222.

⁵ Dawson, *Cities of the Gods*, p. 193.

⁶ George Boys-Stones, “Eros in Government: Zeno and the Virtuous City,” *Classical Quarterly* 48 (1998), 168–174: (p. 169).