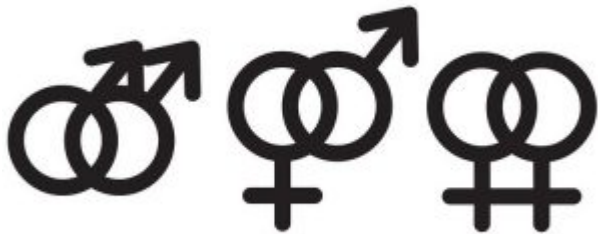


The Bible on Gay and Lesbian (Homosexual) Sex

Description



The church's historical stance on gay/lesbian sex is mostly

right, but not 100% right. An error crept in after the church stopped reading the Bible in the original Greek. I will partly break with tradition here, yet the tradition is mostly right with a single significant error.

Therefore, please don't read this article if you aren't open minded.

Let's dive in.

There are three possible sexual combinations when you have two genders:

- Male/Female
- Male/Male/
- Female/Female

Obviously no one has a problem with (*married*) male/female sex, so we'll ignore that. Further, [the Bible clearly says that all sex outside of marriage is wrong](#). We'll examine male/male sex and then female/female sex after a quick word on clarity.

Clarity in Biblical Exegesis

One of my biggest rules for theology is this: **never base doctrine on verses that aren't clear**. There are

some verses in the Bible which talk about gay (*male/male*) sex but aren't perfectly clear if they are condemning it or something else. These verses are:

- Genesis 19:1-38
- Judges 19:1-30
- Jude 6-7

Nevertheless, I have written a brief synopsis of those passage and outlined why they aren't clear. However, I recommend you don't read my synopsis because these verses aren't clear. I have included them below only for completeness.

[Click here to expand my synopsis. \(Not recommended because these verses aren't clear\)](#)

Genesis 19:1-38

To save space, I won't quote the entire passage. Lot has invited two men (*angels as we discover later*) to stay with him.

Genesis 9:4-9

4 Before they lay down, the men of the city, the men of Sodom, surrounded the house, both young and old, all the people from every quarter;

5 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 have relations with them."

6 But Lot went out to them at the doorway, and shut the door behind him,

7 and said, "Please, my brothers, do not act wickedly.

8 "Now behold, I have two daughters who have not had relations with man; please let me bring them out to you, and do to them whatever you like; only do nothing to these men, inasmuch as they have come under the shelter of my roof."

9 But they said, "Stand aside." Furthermore, they said, "This one came in as an alien, and already he is acting like a judge; now we will treat you worse than them." So they pressed hard against Lot and **came near to break the door.**

I am a great fan of clarity.

This verse isn't clear.

The LGBT community will argue that Sodom's sin here is rape, not desiring to engage in gay sex. The trouble is, the passage isn't clear on what exactly the sin is. Depending on your belief, you can read it either way (*rape or gay sex being the sin*).

I do not base doctrine on verses that are unclear, especially when I can go to verses that *are* clear. Therefore, I won't comment on this passage because it's less clear than some other Biblical passages.

Judges 19:1-30

This is nearly exactly like the event in Genesis with Lot, only with a more disturbing outcome. A man and his concubine were traveling and invited to stay the night with an "old man" of a city they were passing.

Judges 19:22-25

22 While they were celebrating, behold, the men of the city, certain worthless fellows, surrounded the house, pounding the door; and they spoke to the owner of the house, the old man, saying, "Bring out the man who came into your house that we may have relations with him."

23 Then the man, the owner of the house, went out to them and said to them, "No, my fellows, please do not act so wickedly; since this man has come into my house, do not commit this act of folly."

24 "Here is my virgin daughter and his concubine. Please let me bring them out that you may ravish them and do to them whatever you wish. But do not commit such an act of folly against this man."

25 But the men would not listen to him. So the man seized his concubine and brought her out to them; and **they raped her** and abused her all night until morning, then let her go at the approach of dawn.

Again, you could argue that the sin here is rape, not gay sex. They were looking for the man, but settled for the concubine; a woman. No clear indictment of male/male relations is given here.

Again, you could say the "do not act so wickedly" referred to gay sex, but you could also argue it referred to the rape (*which is certainly a wicked act*). Like Genesis, it's definitely not clear that they are referring to male/male sex.

Jude 6-7

Now, the unclear New Testament passage.

Jude 6-7 just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them, since they in the same way as these indulged in gross immorality and went after strange flesh, are exhibited as an example in undergoing the punishment of eternal fire.

I simply don't see a clear indictment of male/male sexual activity here. There is a way to read that passage that way in the English, but in the Greek it's hard to make the case. The word translated "strange" is the Greek word "?????" (heteros), which is actually the root of the "hetero" part of heterosexual.

Honestly, I don't see a clear argument against male/male sexual relations in this verse.

Male/Male Sex

Okay, so it's time to talk about the "clobber passages". (*The LGBT community calls them that because Christians use them to "clobber" them over their sexual practices*). Basically, they are the verses in the Bible where homosexuality is clearly discussed.

There are several passages in the Bible that talk about it.

To be clear: the following passages only apply to male/male sexual relations. Ironically, the Bible treats male/male sex very differently than female/female sex.

The verses are:

1. Leviticus 18:22;
2. Leviticus 20:13
3. 1 Corinthians 6:9-11
4. 1 Timothy 1:9-10
5. Romans 1:27

We'll talk about each of them in turn

Leviticus 18:22

Context: the chapter begins in verses 1-5 with God saying He doesn't want the Israelites to sin the same way that the Egyptians or Canaanites sinned. In verses 6-19, God lists all the people for who you shouldn't "uncover the nakedness of" (*a Hebrew idiom for sex*).

Now, let's pick it up at verse 20

Leviticus 18:20-24

20 'You shall not have intercourse with your neighbor's wife, to be defiled with her.

21 'You shall not give any of your offspring to offer them to Molech, nor shall you profane the name of your God; I am the LORD.

22 'You shall not lie with a male as one lies with a female; it is an abomination.

23 'Also you shall not have intercourse with any animal to be defiled with it, nor shall any woman stand before an animal to mate with it; it is a perversion.

24 'Do not defile yourselves by any of these things; for by all these the nations which I am casting out before you have become defiled.

The prohibition on male/male sex is clear.

It's sandwiched between two other sexual perversions: bestiality and adultery, both of which were serious enough for God to proscribe the death penalty. (*as we'll see soon*).

The word translated "abomination" in verse 22 is "?????????" ([toebah](#)). Some have argued that it simply means "ceremonially unclean". However, that's not supported by the text or its usage. It's used over 100 times in the Old Testament. Every single time it's translated similarly. You can look at every place it's used [here](#). Below is how it's translated.

(*In the NASB*)

- abominable (5),
- abominable act (1),
- abomination (39),
- abominations (60),
- detestable (2),
- detestable act (1),
- detestable thing (3),
- detestable things (3),
- loathsome (2),
- object of loathing (1)

This word is used to describe the worship of idols, those who practice witchcraft, and other obviously immoral things. It's even used to describe God's opinion of burning babies alive on an altar to the pagan god Molech in Jeremiah 32:35. (*Perhaps that's why sacrificing babies in the fire – by "offering them to Molech" – is mentioned in verse 21.*)

This word doesn't mean merely "unclean". There are two other words which are used through this passage to mean "unclean"; this doesn't mean that. In fact, in verse 27 says the defiling (*or uncleanness*) came from the abominations.

Leviticus 18:27 27 (for the men of the land who have been before you have done all these abominations, and the land has become defiled)

From this verse, I don't see how male/male sexual relations could be okay in God's eyes.

Leviticus 20:13

I'll copy/paste with a few extra verses for context, but it's almost the same as the previous verse in Leviticus.

Leviticus 20:10-16

10 'If there is a man who commits adultery with another man's wife, one who commits adultery with his friend's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death.

11 'If there is a man who lies with his father's wife, he has uncovered his father's nakedness; both of them shall surely be put to death, their bloodguiltiness is upon them.

12 'If there is a man who lies with his daughter-in-law, both of them shall surely be put to death; they have committed incest, their bloodguiltiness is upon them.

13 'If there is a man who lies with a male as those who lie with a woman, both of them have committed a detestable act; they shall surely be put to death. Their bloodguiltiness is upon them.

14 'If there is a man who marries a woman and her mother, it is immorality; both he and they shall be burned with fire, so that there will be no immorality in your midst.

15 'If there is a man who lies with an animal, he shall surely be put to death; you shall also kill the animal.

16 'If there is a woman who approaches any animal to mate with it, you shall kill the woman and the animal; they shall surely be put to death. Their bloodguiltiness is upon them.

I want to point out: the penalty for all of these sexual sins is death. Male/male sex is right in the middle of the list. Despite God being super-clear and listing multiple instances of how they could happen, most of the sins in this passage boil down to adultery, bestiality, and male/male sex.

In both places the Torah mentions male/male sex, it's placed in the same category of adultery and bestiality. Those are serious sins, and male/male sex is mentioned in the same breath (*figuratively speaking*).

The phrase "detestable act" is the same word used in Leviticus 18:22. As I said before, this word is used to describe idol worship, practicing witchcraft, and even child sacrifices to pagan gods. Again, male/male sex is counted among adultery and bestiality as the most serious sexual sins. (*We know this because they were the only ones for which the death penalty was proscribed.*)

)

Again, it can't simply mean "ceremonially unclean". This word simply doesn't mean that. (*Often Hebrew words have multiple meanings and can be taken different ways; that's not the case here.*)

Again: this only applies to male/male sexual relations. The Bible takes a different approach to female/female sex, which we'll examine that soon.

1 Corinthians 6:9-10

9 Or 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 effeminate, nor **homosexuals**,

10 nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God.

Many gay men say that this verse is mistranslated. I agree, but not for the reason they say. The word translated "homosexuals" is the Greek word "arsenokoites" ([arsenokoites](#)). It means: "a male engaging in same-gender sexual activity", or more properly:

733 *arsenokoítēs* (from 730 /árros, "a male" and 2845 /koítēs, "a mat, bed") – properly, a man in bed with another man; a *homosexual*.

This word **does** refer to male/male sexual activity. However, it does **not** refer to female/female sexual activity. This word specifically – **and only** – means male/male sexual activity. Therefore, "homosexual" isn't an accurate translation because that would include female/female sex also.

The ESV captures this accurately.

1 Corinthians 6:9 (ESV) Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor **men** who practice homosexuality,

I have heard two explanations from the gay rights camp in an attempt to explain this verse away.

1. It refers to male prostitutes
2. It refers to men forcing other men (*or teenage boys*) into a non-consensual relationship; i.e. rape/pederasty.

To answer explanation #1, we simply need to back up a few words: The word translated "fornicators" is the Greek word " pornos " ([pornos](#)). It means:

4205 *pórnos* (from *perna?*, “to sell off”) – properly, a male prostitute. 4205 (*pórnos*) is “properly, ‘a male prostitute’ (so Xen., etc.); *in the NT, any fornicator*” (Abbott-Smith); i.e. anyone engaging in sexual immorality. See 4202 (*porneia*).

It means anyone engaging in wrong sexual practices, but especially a male prostitute. Why would Paul repeat himself here?

To answer explanation #2, there’s simply no evidence for it. We know it did happen in the culture of the time, but there’s no proof or evidence that’s what Paul is referring to. Obviously rape is wrong, but there’s no evidence that Paul is referring to it here. Further, we’ll examine to see if Paul is talking about pederasty in a moment when look at Roman 1:27

That said, looking at the Biblical context in Romans, Leviticus, and the force of God’s condemnation in the Old Testament, I see no reason not to take the word at it’s plain meaning. It literally means two men having sex, and says that is wrong.

1 Timothy 1:8-10

8 But we know that the Law is good, if one uses it lawfully,

9 realizing the fact that law is not made for a righteous person, but for those who are lawless and rebellious, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers

10 and immoral men and homosexuals and kidnappers and liars and perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound teaching,

Again, the Greek word “?????????????” ([arsenokoites](#)), which is the same word we just discussed in 1 Corinthians 6:9. I see no reason to twist the plain meaning of the word here either.

Romans 1:26-27

26 For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural,

27 and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error.

I see no way to explain verse 27 other than the plain meaning. This is especially true because there’s a Greek word here that often mistranslated to keep the Bible “clean”. The word that’s translated “with” in

the phrase “men with men” is the Greek word “?? ” ([en](#)). It literally means “in”.

1722 en (a preposition) – properly, in (inside, within); (figuratively) “in the realm (sphere) of,” as in the condition (state) in which something operates from the inside (within).

The phrase is literally “men in men”, or perhaps “men inside men”; an obvious reference to the anal intercourse that gay men engage in during sex. This is called an “indecent act” by Paul.

“But isn’t this all about pederasty, not committed gay couples?”

Pederasty is when an adult male has (*anal*) sex with a pubescent or adolescent boy. This was actually quite common in the Greco-Roman empire, and was often forced. This is one of the most common answers to the New Testament passages by those who advocate for the homosexual lifestyle. They say Paul’s commands were prohibiting pederasty (*rape*) and not a “*voluntary, consensual, monogamous relationship between two adult men*“, which is how it’s often phrased.

However, Romans 1:27 answers this quite clearly:

Romans 1:27

27 and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward **one another**, men ~~with~~ in men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error.

Notice the words “one another”, which are a single word in Greek. The word is “???????” ([allélón](#)) and it’s a reciprocal pronoun. What is a reciprocal pronoun? Here’s [the definition from Webster’s Dictionary](#) :

a pronoun (such as *each other*) used when its referents are predicated to bear **the same relationship to one another**

And from Grammar-Monster.com:

A reciprocal pronoun is used to express a **mutual** action or **relationship**. There are two reciprocal pronouns:

- Each other
- One another

Romans 1:27 is describing a **mutual** relationship. Not a force one; a **mutual** one. They “burned in their

desire toward one another”. **This is clearly both voluntary and consensual, yet Paul still calls it an indecent act.** It might sound nice to say that these bible passages are about pederasty and don't condemn a “*voluntary, consensual, monogamous relationship between two adult men*”, but it's not true.

The Bible does clearly condemn that.

I would argue that it clearly does so in the five places that we've looked at. However, even if I'm wrong about the other four, this one is perfectly clear. A “*voluntary, consensual, monogamous relationship between two adult men*” is wrong in God's eyes.

Male/Male Conclusion

It seems to me that the Bible paints a consistent picture of male/male sex. From God's opinion, it's wrong and a sin at least on the level of adultery and bestiality.

Female/Female Sex

You may have noticed that every scripture we've examined so far deals specifically – **and only** – with male/male sex.

Nothing in the Old Testament **even mentions** female/female sexual relations. It's just not there. Further, the Rabbinic Sages were also completely silent on the topic. In fact, the Jews didn't even mention it until at least the end of the fourth century AD. Even then, it wasn't considered a serious sin (*more a “slap on the wrist” type thing*). The New Testament is equally silent.

There's only one place that **might** talk about it, but the true meaning is frequently missed.

Romans 1:26-27

26 For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural **function** for that which is unnatural,

27 and **in the same way** also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error.

There's a couple things to keep in mind.

- **First**, I would like to point out that it does not say “women with women” here, even though “men with men” is used in verse 27.
- **Second**, I would like to point out that – as we just looked at – verse 27 **clearly** refers to men engaging in anal intercourse. Remember context is important.
- **Third**, and most importantly the Greek words used here make it practically impossible for verse 26 to refer to female/female sex, but virtually certain it refers to men engaging in anal sex with women

Let me explain.

(And you can double check everything I'm about to say by looking at [Romans 1:26 in an interlinear bible](#).)

The Original Gender of the Words

To start with, both men and women are mentioned, you just can't tell in English. In English, we only have the gender neutral words "they/them/theirs" for a third person pronoun. Our word "they" doesn't convey gender.

However, the Greek word equivalent to our word "they" is "?????" ([autos](#)); it can and does convey gender here. So let's look at the verse with gender included:

Romans 1:26 For this reason God gave them (*Masculine pronoun*) over to degrading passions; for their (*Masculine possessive pronoun*) women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural,

Who is being given over?

Answer: the men.

In fact, you could translate it something like this:

Romans 1:26 (*my modified version*)

26 For this reason God gave the men over to degrading passions; for the men's women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural,

Yes that's awkward English ("*the men's women*"), but it accurately conveys the gender of the original Greek. Rendering the original gender of the word makes it clear that both men and women are involved here.

Remember, it's the men who were given over to "degrading passions".

(*That's important.*)

Penile Penetration is Required

The Greek word translated "function" is the Greek word "???????" ([chrésis](#)). According to Strong's Concordance, it means:

5540 From *chraomai*; employment, i.e. (specially), sexual **intercourse** (as an occupation of the body) — use.

Chr sis means intercourse; **inter**course. Not outer-course (*referring to non-penetrative sexual activity*), but intercourse (*referring specifically to penetrative sexual activity*). Chr sis requires penile penetration to be applicable.

The most respected Greek lexicon, BDAG (*That is, the “Bauer-Danker-Arndt-Gingrich” lexicon*) has an entry that agrees. Now, unfortunately it’s not available for free online anywhere and thus I can’t link to a source, so you’ll have to trust me (*or don’t; that’s why there’s one copy/pasted above*). I have my paper copy in front of me and I’ll manually transcribe the relevant entry.

3. *relations, function, esp. of sexual intercourse*

And after that, it lists a bunch of references of works outside the Bible where it’s used that way. In the specific context of sexual relations, the idea is intercourse. Regardless, the point stands:

Without penile penetration, it’s not chr sis.

I’m not the only one who thinks this either. The following quote is from David J. Murphy, who has a PhD. in Classics and taught Latin and Greek for many years.

When it refers to one person’s sexual activities with another person, though, *chresis* is assigned to the man, who was expected to penetrate someone and thus, “use” that person—a woman, a boy, a male slave. Early Christian writers as well speak of the husband’s having “use” of the wife (Clement, *Stromateis* 3.11.71.4; Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho* 110; Athenagoras, *Legation* 32.1). As far as I have found in the sources, *chresis* as sexual activity **always** is associated with penetration.

...

I do not know a case where the penetrated partner is said to have sexual “use” of the penetrating partner. It is not surprising, then, that David E. Frederickson has found no case where *chresis* refers to female homoeroticism (“Natural and Unnatural Use in Romans 1:24-27,” in *Homosexuality, Science and the “Plain Sense” of Scripture*, ed. David L. Balch, Grand Rapids 2000, 197-222: 201).

...

On the other hand, this symmetry between the *chresis* phrases within v. 26b makes problems for the “lesbian” interpretation. What is supposed to happen in “*chresis* against nature” if we have two females? If neither penetrates the other, there is no *chresis*.

Source (*emphasis added*)

To summarize:

Two women cannot engage in “chresis” = penetrative sex because neither has the anatomy required to do so.

(nor does any woman)

That means that Paul cannot be referring to female/female sex – which is always non-penetrative sex – in verse 26 because women can't have chresis (sexual penetration/intercourse) because they lack the required equipment (a penis).

As we've already covered, verse 27 was specifically about anal intercourse (*though in the context of male/male sex*).

This asymmetry between v. 26b and v. 27 reflects typical gender expectations, in which Paul looks at the penetrative act from the point of view, first, of the penetrated female, and then, from the standpoint of the penetrating male. Only the male has use “of” the other partner. In other words, in “natural *chresis*,” the females start out being penetrated by males, and they do not have “use” of anyone. In “unnatural *chresis*,” the females again are penetrated by males, and again they do not have “use” of anyone. They have only switched the orifice they presented for penetration.

[Source](#) (*emphasis added*)

This well agrees with the context of verse 27 talking about anal sex.

More Greek Evidence

Verse 27 opens with “in the same way” or “likewise” depending on your translation, then speaks about men engaging in anal sex. The Greek word that’s translated “in the same way” or “likewise”, is “??????” ([homoiós](#)).

Romans 1:26-27

26 For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural,

27 and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error.

“Homoiós” is an adverb, and adverbs describe or modify verbs. Therefore, it describes what someone is doing. (*Our English word “likewise” lacks this specificity centered on action.*)

Homoiós is used 31 times in the Bible, and every single time it refers to similarity of action.

Since verse 27 begins with homoiós, we can be sure that the same action that was performed in verse 27 (*anal sex*) is also being performed in verse 26.

I might translate homoiós here as “doing the same thing”.

Yet more Greek Evidence

Further, the Greek at the end of verse 26 supports the anal interpretation vs the lesbian interpretation. Here's the verse in the ESV, which is slightly more literal in this passage than the NASB I've been quoting. (A rare occurrence, as [my article on the best Bible translations](#) makes clear.)

Romans 1:26 (ESV)

26 For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are **contrary** to nature;

The word translated “contrary” is the Greek word “????” ([para](#)). It's where we get our English word “parallel”, and it means:

3844 *pará* (a preposition) – properly, close beside. 3844 /*pará* (“from closely alongside”) introduces someone (something) as **very “close beside.”**

3844 (*pará*) an emphatic “from,” means “from close beside” (“alongside”). It stresses nearness (closeness) which is often not conveyed in translation. 3844 (*pará*) is typically theologically significant, even when used as a prefix (i.e. in composition). 3844 (*pará*) usually adds the overtone, “from close beside” (implying intimate participation) and can be followed by the genitive, dative, or accusative case – **each one conveying a distinct nuance.**

I won't go full Greek language geek on you because I'll lose 90% of my readers. You just need to know that in this verse it's paired with the accusative case, and thus has the following additional nuance of meaning.

1. properly, of place, at, by, **near, by the side of, beside**, along;
2. beside, beyond, i.e. metaphorically,
 1. equivalent to **contrary to**:

The primary meaning of the word is “very close beside”, with the added nuance of “contrary to” when followed by a word the accusative case (*which it is here*). So it primarily means “very close beside”, but the additional meaning of “contrary to” is tacked on.

The Final – and Strongest – Nail in the Coffin

There is a Greek word here that no major translation includes. None. Not even one. It's the Greek conjunction “??” ([te](#), pronounced “teh”)

5037 té (a conjunction) – “and **both**” (“**both** and”). 5037 /té (“and **both**”) occurs 204 times in the NT and unfortunately is often *not translated*.

[When translated, 5037 (té) is usually rendered “and,” “**both** and,” or “and **both**.”]

It means “*both and*”, and is used all over the New Testament. One example of a typical usage in ordinary conversation would be: “*Yesterday, té (both) Mary and John went to the store.*”

Even when té is translated, it’s often only translated “and” while the “both” component is ignored. In fact, té is used 7 times in Romans chapter 1, but most translations only have the word “both” 3 or 4 times. While much of the time that’s (*sort of*) okay because it doesn’t change the meaning, that’s not the case with this verse.

The “both” component is vitally important here.

So here’s the verse with té inserted in its proper location. Remember, té means “both and”

Romans 1:26 (*my modified version*)

26 For this reason, God gave the men over to degrading passions; for té their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural,

Remember, té means “both and”. Now, a quirk of Greek is that it likes to omit nouns and pronouns where we’d need them in English. That’s mostly because Greek is more flexible in some ways than English. Many translations will italicize words that the translators added for clarity, so many have italicized pronouns. English needs them, Greek doesn’t.

Since té means “both and”, we need to decide who the two parties are.

The second party is obvious: “their women”. The first party is almost as obvious, because there’s only two other parties mentioned in the verse: “the men” and “God”, and it’s obviously not God. Further, as previously explained we’ll need to add a pronoun to compensate for the limitations of English. To make the addition clear, I’ll make the added pronoun **blue**.

So here’s what that verse looks like with that understanding.

Romans 1:26 (*my modified version*)

26 For this reason, God gave **the men** over to degrading passions; for both **they** and **their women** exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural,

Making sense yet?

Putting it all together

Let's look at the verse again with all of this understanding.

Romans 1:26-27 (*My modified version*)

26 For this reason God gave the men over to degrading passions; for both *they* and their women exchanged the natural penile penetration for that which is very close beside (and contrary to) nature,

27 and doing the same thing also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men in men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error.

we know both men and women are involved in penetrative intercourse, and penetration of something that is “*very close beside*” natural penetration. This is further confirmed in the next verse which says “in the same way” (*homoiós* = “*doing the same thing*”) followed shortly by “men in men”.

Sounds like anal intercourse to me.

Further, the early church fathers agreed

The early church fathers Clement of Alexandria, Athanasius, and Augustine all understood the unnatural act as being **non-coital intercourse**, that is... **anal sex**. (*Emphasis original.*)

Clement said this in *Paedagogus*. Likewise Tertullian in *On the Military Garland*, Athanasius in *Against the Nations*, and Augustine argued it many times over several decades; notably in *On Marriage and Concupiscence*, *On the Good of Marriage*, and *Against Julian*.

Again, the bible is completely silent on female/female sexual acts.

It simply doesn't mention them, and neither did the Jews' Rabbinic Sages until a few hundred years after Christ died.

Brief aside: Why does Paul mention this?

You might ask why Paul mentions anal sex. To answer that question, I'll quote from another article on the anal interpretation of Romans 1:26

It was common in antiquity for women to have anal or oral sex with men, often to avoid pregnancy or to preserve the hymen and thus, technically, their virginity. Trying to explain how Genesis 24:16 is not redundant when it recounts that Rebecca, future wife of Isaac, was a virgin and “had not known man,” Rabbi Simeon ben Lakish, ca. 250 C.E., could say, “The daughters of the gentiles had been careful to protect the virginity of their vaginas, but they were quite free with themselves at other orifices. But this one [Rebecca] was ‘a virgin’ as to the vagina, and ‘no man had known’ her under any other circumstances either”

(Midrash Rabbah Genesis LX:V 2.B, translated by Jacob Neusner). These gentile girls are like Rebecca because, technically, they are virgins. They keep their hymen intact. They are unlike her because they find ways to “know” men anyway. [Source](#).

That jives well with my research on the topic. In that age, women often engaged in anal sex either to avoid pregnancy or to technically preserve their virginity by ensuring the hymen wasn't broken.

One Final Point on female/female Sex

Disclaimer: The following is anecdotal at best, not necessarily my opinion, and only included for completeness because it came up so much in my research.

The most common way to describe sex in the Bible is “he went into her”. In my research, I have found time and again that according to the ancient mind, sex required penile penetration. If there wasn't a penis in a vagina (*or other orifice*), then it wasn't sex in their view. Perhaps that's why any mention of female/female sex is absent: because – in their mind – it wasn't considered sex.

But again, that's anecdotal at best and not necessarily my opinion; I'm merely including it here for completeness because it came up so often in my research.

An Addendum Concerning Oral Sex

Some of the people who think that Romans 1:26 refers to anal sex also apply the same verse to oral sex. Because of that, we'll take just a quick moment to address that. Oral sex on both men and women is spoke of positively in Song of Solomon, though euphemistically. And he mentions both men and women giving/receiving.

Here are the verses on women receiving:

Song of Solomon 4:16 & 8:2 (*the woman speaking, ESV*)

4:16 Awake, O north wind, and come, O south wind! Blow upon my garden, let its spices flow. Let my beloved come to his garden, and eat its choicest fruits.

8:2 would lead you and bring you into the house of my mother— she who used to teach me. I would give you spiced wine to drink, the juice of my pomegranate.

The only part of a woman's body that could be called a “garden” is the area covered in pubic hair. The reference to pomegranate makes sense if you've ever seen one split open; it bears a striking resemblance to a woman's labia when engorged/aroused. The “spiced wine” should need no explanation given the context, neither should the phrase “blow on my garden” or “eat its choicest fruits”.

Yeah, there's stuff in the Bible that would make most Christians blush.

But Solomon doesn't leave the men out either.

Song of Solomon 2:3 (ESV)

3 As an apple tree among the trees of the forest, so is my beloved among the young men.
With great delight I sat in his shadow, and his fruit was sweet to my taste.

If you look at an apple tree upside down, the resemblance to a man's penis, testicles, and scrotum are fairly unmistakable (*at least in this context*). Plus, "his fruit" could hardly be anything but his sperm/semens, of which the woman loves the taste. The woman speaks of sitting "in his shadow" with great delight. If a woman kneels to perform oral sex on a man, his shadow will naturally fall over her. I've heard some claim that the apple tree was a common euphemism for male genitalia in ancient Middle Eastern poetry. Regardless of if that's the case or not, the symbolism seems pretty clear in this context.

So while anal sex is condemned and should never be practiced by Christians, oral sex is perfectly fine and acceptable for Christians. However, it's still wrong for two males to engage in oral sex. Romans 1:27 makes it clear that when two males "*burned in their desire toward one another*" it's still wrong, and that includes oral sex.

Conclusion

Anal sex is wrong according to God. Therefore, Christians should never engage in it.

Ever.

(By contrast, oral sex is spoken of positively by the Song of Solomon and is perfectly acceptable.)

Male/male sex is roundly and clearly condemned as a sin that's as serious as adultery and bestiality, and it's a sin which will exclude a person from the kingdom of God.

Female/female sex is nowhere condemned, or even mentioned in the entire Bible. God is completely silent on the topic, despite clearly condemning male/male sex at least five times. God even goes out of his way in Leviticus to say women couldn't have sex with animals. Yet even with all this specificity He never condemns female/female sex, nor even mentions it.

Not even once.

Make of that what you will.

I should also reiterate that [Yes, The Bible CLEARLY Says Sex Outside of Marriage is Wrong](#), and marriage is only between men and women... Just in case you thought I was in favor of lesbian "marriage". (*which I'm definitely not. Marriage is only between men and women by definition.*)

P.S. I have a suspicion why God condemned male/male sex while being silent on female/female; but that will have to wait for another day/article.

EDIT: I don't have that article written yet, but I'll bet you can figure it out from [this article](#) that I recently published. (*In December of 2021.*)