

Jonathan Loved David

When you read a phrase like this title, what is the first thing that comes to your mind? In our current cultural climate, many people will connect the statement to some expression of homosexuality. But that simply reflects the way our culture influences our thinking. Examine the following passages and interact with the questions as we try to understand the intimate relationship between these two men and frame our thinking around what the Bible teaches rather than what the culture offers.

1. Read 1 Samuel 18:3, 20:17, and 2 Samuel 1:25–26.
 - a. What characterized the relationship between David and Jonathan?

 - b. How do these verses relate to Leviticus 19:18 and Matthew 22:39?

2. Read 1 Corinthians 6:9–11 and answer the following:
 - a. What sexual sins are listed in this passage?

 - b. Which of the sins listed in this passage are you guilty of?

 - c. Does homosexuality have any different judgment than the other sins listed in this passage?

 - d. What hope does this passage offer?

3. Based on what you have read, is there any justification for the claims that David and Jonathan were involved in a homosexual relationship?

4. How could you respond to someone who made the claims that Jonathan's giving his clothes to David, the statements of mutual love, the covenant between the two, and the kiss mentioned in 20:41 amount to a clear case that the two men were involved in a homosexual relationship?

5. While Scripture is clear that homosexual behavior is a sin (there are both Old and New Testament passages on the matter), we Christians often elevate it to a special status above all other sins. How can we respond in a way that will be helpful to the individual if someone admits that they have committed this sin?

6. How can we keep our own prejudices from causing us to unrighteously judge those who sin in ways that we find "worse" than our own sins?

Jonathan Loved David Answer Key

1. Read 1 Samuel 18:3, 20:17, and 2 Samuel 1:25–26.
 - a. **What characterized the relationship between David and Jonathan?** *There was a mutual love for one another, each loving the other as himself (“as his own soul”). In 2 Samuel, David compares Jonathan’s love to that of the women in his life (he had multiple wives).*
 - b. **How do these verses relate to Leviticus 19:18 and Matthew 22:39?** *The love between these two men is an example of loving others as yourself. They are a model of the type of love we should be expressing toward one another.*
2. Read 1 Corinthians 6:9–11 and answer the following:
 - a. **What sexual sins are listed in this passage?** *The term “sexually immoral” (Greek, pornoi) is used in a general sense to cover any sexually immoral act like fornication; adultery is included; the phrase in the ESV refers to “men who practice homosexuality” but is split into two separate ideas in most translations as “homosexuals, nor sodomites” or “effeminate or homosexuals” based on the two Greek words that are used (malakoi and arsenokoitai). Multiple types of sexual sin are mentioned, both heterosexual and homosexual sin. Any sexual activity outside of the bounds of a man and a woman in a marriage is forbidden as sin by God.*
 - b. **Which of the sins listed in this passage are you guilty of?** *If we are honest, we can all find sins in this list that we have committed. Who has not reviled/slandered another person or been greedy? And this is just one list, not an exhaustive list.*
 - c. **Does homosexuality have any different judgment than the other sins listed in this passage?** *No, the same judgment of not inheriting the kingdom of God is the same for all of these.*
 - d. **What hope does this passage offer?** *Even in the acknowledgement of past sin in that “such were some of you,” this passage offers great hope. In Christ there is a cleansing of sin, a setting apart to his service, and a justification. Through the Holy Spirit is newness of life. Emphasize this point in the discussion.*
3. **Based on what you have read, is there any justification for the claims that David and Jonathan were involved in a homosexual relationship?** *There is nothing in the text that would indicate any illicit relationship. It is imported into the text by those seeking to justify their own sinful actions. This is an example of eisegesis—adding an idea into the text. One must read between the lines with an agenda to find any such idea in the text.*
4. **How could you respond to someone who made the claims that Jonathan’s giving his clothes to David, the statements of mutual love, the covenant between the two, and the kiss mentioned in 20:41 amount to a clear case that the two men were involved in a homosexual relationship?** *Discuss various answers. The Bible is not afraid to condemn the sins of its heroes. Later we read that David committed adultery (a sin listed alongside homosexuality in 1 Corinthians 6:9–11), and he is condemned for that. Why would we assume that the writer of this book covered up his homosexual sin but recorded his heterosexual sin? There is no reason to do so. Beyond that, these phrases are used many other times to express non-sexual love, and they are not questioned in those instances.*
5. **While Scripture is clear that homosexual behavior is a sin (there are both Old and New Testament passages on the matter), we Christians often elevate it to a special status above all other sins. How can we respond in a way that will be helpful to the individual if someone admits that they have committed this sin?** *Our first attitude toward those who are caught in sin should be one of compassion, remembering that apart from God’s grace in our lives we would be in the same place (Titus 3:3–7). While we should not dismiss the sin as irrelevant, neither should we overreact to homosexuality in a way we would not if they confessed to being a drunkard, reviler, or fornicator. All of these are sins against God and need to be repented of.*
6. **How can we keep our own prejudices from causing us to unrighteously judge those who sin in ways that we find “worse” than our own sins?** *Sin is sin, though there are some forms of sin that have more extensive consequences. Paul does set sexual sin in a different light, but he doesn’t distinguish between heterosexual or homosexual sin (1 Corinthians 6:12–20). If we make it a practice to preach the gospel to ourselves every day, acknowledging our own sinfulness and God’s grace and mercy toward us, we can cultivate compassion for others who sin differently than us. Being willing to confess our own sins one to another and to pray for one another (James 5:16) can help us to face those attitudes with the help of our brothers and sisters.*