

TEACHER / FACILITATOR DISCUSSION GUIDE

LGBTQ & THE BIBLE – “GREEK TO ME”

SESSION OVERVIEW (FOR THE FACILITATOR)

Big Idea

Certain Greek words found in the New Testament are often treated as clear, settled condemnations of LGBTQ+ people. This session invites participants to slow down and examine those assumptions. Rather than approaching Scripture as a list of modern categories translated backward, this lesson explores how **language, culture, translation history, and theology** shape meaning.

The goal is not to dismiss Scripture, but to **take it seriously enough to read it carefully**—recognizing that translation is interpretation, and that ancient words do not always map neatly onto modern concepts of sexuality or identity.

Instead of asking, “*What does the English Bible say?*” this session asks a deeper question:

What did these Greek words likely mean to their original audiences—and what do they not mean?

TEACHING GOALS

By the end of this session, participants should be able to:

- Understand why translation matters when reading the New Testament
 - Recognize that some Greek terms are rare, unclear, or context-dependent
 - Identify common assumptions made about Greek words related to sexuality
 - Distinguish between ancient behaviors and modern identity categories
 - Approach Scripture with humility, curiosity, and historical awareness
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TIME GUIDE (Suggested – 60–75 minutes)

- Opening & prayer: 10 minutes
 - Teaching & discussion (three movements): 40–50 minutes
 - Personal reflection & closing prayer: 10–15 minutes
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OPENING (10 MINUTES)

Opening Question (Icebreaker)



“When you hear someone say, ‘*The Bible is clear in the original Greek*,’ what reactions or questions come up for you?”

(Allow participants to respond freely. Do not correct or interpret at this stage.)

Facilitator Notes

- Some participants may feel intimidated by biblical languages
- Others may have been silenced by appeals to “the Greek” as unquestionable authority
- Emphasize that **no one in the room needs to know Greek** to engage faithfully
- Set a tone of shared learning rather than expertise or debate

Opening Prayer

You may pray aloud:

“God of wisdom and truth,
you spoke into real cultures, real languages, and real lives.
As we explore words that have carried great weight and great pain,
give us humility, patience, and clarity.
Help us seek understanding rather than certainty,
and love rather than fear. Amen.”

FOUNDATIONAL CONTEXT (FOR THE FACILITATOR)

Before formal teaching, briefly frame the session:

- The New Testament was written in **Koine Greek**, not English
- Translation always involves choices, assumptions, and limitations
- Some Greek words related to sexuality appear **very rarely** in Scripture
- Meanings must be understood within **historical, cultural, and literary context**

Reassure participants:

“Studying original language is not about proving a point.
It is about respecting the distance between our world and the biblical world.”

TEACHING MOVEMENT 1: WHY TRANSLATION IS NEVER NEUTRAL

Key Teaching Point

Translation is not a mechanical process—it is an interpretive one. Every Bible translation reflects decisions made by translators living in particular times and cultures.



Facilitator Explanation

Help participants consider:

- Ancient Greek did not contain modern categories like “sexual orientation”
- English words often carry meanings that did not exist in the ancient world
- Translators must decide how to render words that lack direct equivalents
- Over time, translations can reflect **theological and cultural assumptions**

Emphasize:

- The Bible was not written *to* modern debates
- Later readers often bring questions the text was never addressing

Discussion Questions

- Have you ever noticed differences between Bible translations?
- Why do you think people appeal to original languages in debates?
- What risks arise when translation is treated as neutral or unquestionable?

Facilitator Notes

- Keep the conversation focused on process, not conclusions
- Avoid implying that all translations are dishonest or malicious
- Reinforce that faithful Christians can still ask critical questions

TEACHING MOVEMENT 2: RARE WORDS AND BIG ASSUMPTIONS

Key Teaching Point

Some of the most debated Greek terms related to sexuality are **rare, ambiguous, and undefined** within Scripture itself—yet they are often treated as clear and universal.

Facilitator Explanation

Guide participants to reflect on:

- Some Greek words appear only once or twice in the New Testament
- Their meanings must be inferred from limited usage
- Ancient discussions of sex focused on **status, power, and excess**, not identity
- Behaviors described in Scripture do not map cleanly onto modern relationships



Emphasize:

- The Bible does not define these terms the way modern readers assume
- Certainty often comes from tradition, not the text itself
- Acknowledging ambiguity is not weakness—it is honesty

Discussion Questions

- How do you feel when Scripture does not give clear definitions?
- Why do you think ambiguity makes people uncomfortable?
- What changes if these texts are about exploitation or excess rather than identity?

Facilitator Notes

- This section may challenge long-held beliefs
- Encourage curiosity rather than defensiveness
- Affirm that faith can coexist with unanswered questions

TEACHING MOVEMENT 3: WHEN LANGUAGE IS USED AS A WEAPON

Key Teaching Point

Harm occurs when uncertain language is treated as absolute truth—especially when it is used to exclude, shame, or silence others.

Facilitator Explanation

Invite participants to consider:

- How appeals to “the Greek” can shut down conversation
- How complexity is often reduced to soundbites
- How Scripture can be used to reinforce fear rather than faith

Emphasize:

- Jesus consistently centers people over precision
- Scripture is meant to lead toward love, justice, and restoration
- Words should be handled with care because they shape lives

Discussion Questions

- What responsibility comes with teaching or quoting Scripture?



- How can humility change theological conversations?
- What would it look like to hold conviction without weaponizing language?

Facilitator Notes

- Avoid framing this as an argument to be won
 - Keep the focus on spiritual formation, not ideology
 - Re-center on God's character and purpose
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PERSONAL REFLECTION (10 MINUTES)

Invite silence. You may read aloud:

“Now we see in part; then we shall see fully.”

Reflection Prompts

- Where have I equated certainty with faithfulness?
- How have certain interpretations shaped how I see others?
- What might it mean to trust God even when language is incomplete?

(Allow quiet space. Do not rush.)

CLOSING (PRAYER & CHALLENGE)

Closing Prayer

Pray for:

- Humility in handling Scripture
- Wisdom in interpreting ancient texts
- Compassion for those affected by theological debates

You may close with:

“God of grace,
teach us to read your Word with care, courage, and love.
Where we have clung to certainty over compassion, forgive us.
Where we fear complexity, give us trust.
Lead us into truth that reflects your heart. Amen.”



OPTIONAL TAKE-HOME CHALLENGE

Invite participants to:

- Compare two different Bible translations of the same passage
 - Notice where wording differs
 - Ask: *“What assumptions might shape each translation?”*
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FINAL FACILITATOR REMINDER

This session is not about mastering Greek.

It is about **learning humility**.

Faithful reading does not demand absolute certainty.

Sometimes it calls us to slow down, listen carefully,
and trust that God is bigger than our words.

When Scripture is handled with care,
it becomes a place of **encounter rather than exclusion**.

