

## STUDENT DISCUSSION GUIDE

### LGBTQ & THE BIBLE – “GREEK TO ME”

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#### SESSION FOCUS

In conversations about sexuality and the Bible, people often hear the phrase, “*In the original Greek, it’s very clear.*” Greek words are frequently presented as final proof that Scripture has a single, settled meaning—especially in discussions about LGBTQ+ people.

This session invites you to slow down and approach the New Testament with **curiosity rather than certainty**. Instead of assuming that ancient words map neatly onto modern categories, this study explores how **language, culture, and translation** shape meaning.

Rather than asking, “*What does my English Bible say?*” this session explores a deeper question: **What did these Greek words mean in their original context—and what might we be assuming that they do not mean?**

The goal is not to weaken Scripture, but to read it **more carefully, honestly, and faithfully**.

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#### OPENING REFLECTION

Before continuing, take a few moments to reflect:

- What emotions come up when someone appeals to “the original Greek” in a debate?
- Have you ever felt confident, confused, or shut down by language arguments about the Bible?
- What assumptions do you bring about how clear or fixed biblical language is?

*(You may want to write a few notes before moving on.)*

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#### SCRIPTURE CONTEXT

The New Testament was written in **Koine Greek**, a common language used across the Roman world. It was not written with modern questions about sexual orientation or identity in mind.

As you move through this session, keep in mind:

- Greek words do not always have direct English equivalents
- Some words appear very rarely in Scripture
- Meaning is shaped by **context, culture, and usage**, not just dictionaries

As you reflect, notice where you feel comfort, resistance, or uncertainty.

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## KEY IDEA

Studying Greek is not about uncovering secret certainty.

It is about recognizing that **translation always involves interpretation**.

Ancient words cannot simply be lifted out of their world and dropped into ours without care. Faithful reading requires humility, patience, and awareness of our own assumptions.

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## PART 1: WHY TRANSLATION MATTERS

Every English Bible is the result of countless interpretive decisions. Translators must choose how to express ancient ideas in modern language, often bridging large cultural gaps.

Words related to sexuality in the ancient world usually focused on **behavior, power, excess, or social status**, not identity or orientation as we understand them today.

Translation does not merely transfer meaning—it shapes it.

### Reflection Questions

- Have you noticed differences between Bible translations before?
- Why do you think people treat some translations as more authoritative than others?
- What might be gained by acknowledging that translation is interpretive?

### Personal Notes:

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## PART 2: RARE WORDS, LIMITED CLARITY

Some of the most debated Greek terms connected to sexuality appear only once or twice in the New Testament. They are not clearly defined within Scripture itself.

Because of this, meanings are often **assumed rather than explained**, shaped by later traditions and cultural understandings rather than by the text alone.

This does not make Scripture unreliable—it reminds us that **certainty is sometimes imported, not inherent**.

### Reflection Questions

- How do you usually respond when the Bible feels unclear or ambiguous?
- Why is ambiguity often uncomfortable in matters of faith?
- What changes if these passages are about specific behaviors rather than whole categories of people?

### Personal Notes:



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## PART 3: WHEN LANGUAGE IS USED TO HARM

Appeals to Greek can sometimes shut down conversation instead of deepening understanding. When complex language is reduced to slogans, Scripture can become a tool for exclusion rather than transformation.

Throughout the New Testament, faith is not measured by perfect understanding, but by **love, humility, and fruitfulness**.

Words matter because people are affected by how they are used.

### Reflection Questions

- Have you seen Scripture used in ways that caused harm or silence?
- What responsibility comes with quoting or teaching the Bible?
- How might humility change the way we hold our interpretations?

### Personal Notes:

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## PERSONAL REFLECTION

Take a few quiet moments to reflect:

- Where have I equated certainty with faithfulness?
- How have my beliefs been shaped more by tradition than by careful reading?
- What would it mean to trust God even when language feels incomplete?

### Personal Response:

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## CLOSING PRAYER

In your own words, or silently, pray for:

- Humility in reading Scripture
  - Patience with complexity
  - Wisdom to hold truth with compassion
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## OPTIONAL TAKE-HOME PRACTICE

This week:



- Compare two different English translations of the same New Testament passage
  - Notice where wording differs
  - Ask yourself: *What choices did translators have to make here?*
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## FINAL THOUGHT

The Bible was not written to eliminate all questions.

It was written to draw people into **relationship with God and one another**.

Faithful reading does not demand absolute certainty.

It invites trust, humility, and love—

and reminds us that God's truth is larger than any single word.

