

Two kinds of homophobia.

Romans 1:26-27 'For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet.'

There are two kinds of homophobia; external and internal homophobia. External homophobia comes through people outside of the homosexual and lesbian community; internal homophobia (also known as internalized homophobia) comes from within an individual who has in some way been involved or is involved in homosexual, lesbian, or cross-gender behaviour. Internal homophobia produces feelings of remorse, condemnation, shame, and self-repulsion resulting from gay, lesbian and cross-gender behaviour.

It is important to distinguish between the two forms of homophobia because most people associate homophobia with external homophobia and the problem of internal homophobia is being ignored or blamed solely upon external homophobia. If external homophobia is the only cause of homophobia then we should expect to find a sudden decrease in suicides and depression within the gay community following the success of gay rights and the passing of the law allowing gay marriage. If internal homophobia is not related to external homophobia then we can expect the problem to increase as homosexual, lesbian, and cross-gender behaviour increases.

There is a need for clarification in regard to external homophobia. There are two kinds of external homophobia. There is an aggressive homophobia which attacks and bullies gays either verbally or physically. This is never acceptable. Likewise, if gay behaviour deliberately provokes non-gays to cause an aggressive homophobic response then both the provocation and the aggressive response should be condemned. But the term homophobia has come to include all who do not accept homosexual and lesbian relationships as natural.

When a person is called homophobic for rejecting homosexuality and lesbianism as a moral lifestyle then homophobia means 'non-acceptance' and not 'aggression'. There is a world of difference. This kind of homophobia is often associated with 'institutionalised homophobia'. This is an incorrect generalisation as moral values are an integral part of our individual identity. There is no justification for calling a person homophobic simply because they regard homosexuality and lesbianism as immoral. The only form of external homophobia that should be condemned is aggressive homophobia.

The gay community places the blame for internal homophobia upon both forms of external homophobia, non-acceptance and aggression. However, Bible believing Christians associate internal homophobia with the words of Romans 1:26-27 'receiving in themselves that recompense of their error'. By these words we understand internal homophobia to be a natural reaction to an unnatural act. This of course goes against the modern teaching that some people are born gay but facts uphold scriptural truth. Internal homophobia is experienced by many who are involved in homosexual or lesbian relationships.

In conclusion, homophobia needs to be correctly defined. If non-acceptance of homosexual and lesbian lifestyles is seen as identical to or associated with aggressive external homophobia then people who have no ill intent but still desire to uphold traditional moral values will be unfairly criticised. In addition to this, external homophobia must be distinguished from internal homophobia. A person who experiences internal homophobia needs help so that the depressive feelings of remorse and regret are handled in a constructive manner. The cause of gay rights should not be allowed to prevent those suffering from internal homophobia gaining access to the help they need.

Stephen Dulwich