The Heart Wants What It Wants

Understanding and Applying the Biblical Doctrine of Concupiscence

# Introduction

* Concupiscence = the disordered (and therefore sinful) state of all our appetites
* The first motions of our appetites – even before the will assents, even if we resist them and loathe their presence – are sinful if they run contrary to God’s law

Andrew frequently battles with unjust anger. When stuck in traffic, when reading his news feed, when his children act up, when dealing with a frustrating client at work – it keeps catching him off guard. Occasionally it boils over, but mostly he manages to keep it under fairly tight control. Nevertheless, he often feels strong impulses to lash out and even punch things. Are these initial impulses to anger and violence sin? Does Andrew need to repent of it? Or does it only become sin if he nurtures the anger in his heart, or speaks and acts in violent ways?

Is the presence of an unwanted sexual attraction simply a tragic consequence of the fall – something to be resisted, but not sinful in itself? Or is it sin? If you want to say it *is* sin – how could that possibly be pastoral? Won’t you crush people with unnecessary guilt and shame?

‘It’s not a sin to be tempted’. Is this true? At what point does the experience of temptation cross the line into sin?

What does it mean to say that Jesus was tempted in every way as we are, yet without sin (Heb 4:15)? Did he experience strong attractions to sinful things, even though he never indulged them? If his temptations were only external, would they be real temptations?

Are our answers to these questions something evangelicals are free to differ over? What theological and pastoral implications might our decisions have?

## Every Inclination of the Heart

* Genesis 6:11-13

‘And the earth was *ruined* in God’s sight, and the earth was filled with violence. And God saw the earth and behold it was *ruined*, for all flesh *had* *ruined* their way on the earth. And God said to Noah, ‘I have determined to make an end of all flesh, for the earth is filled with violence through them. Beyond, *I will ruin* them with the earth.’ (Gen 6:11-13)

* Genesis 6:5
* ‘inclination’, or ‘shaping’ – Heb יֵ֙צֶר ; *yêṣer*
* Related to verb יצר ; *yāṣar* cf. Gen 2:7 – to form
* What begins in the heart does not stay in the heart
* From the heart flow the springs of life (Prov 4:23)
* ‘From within, out of the heart of man…’ (Mark 7:20)
* Key biblical texts: Gen 6:5; 8:21; Ps 51:5; Jer 17:9; Mk 7:20-23; Lk 6:43-45; Eph 2:1-3; Rom 7:7-25; Gal 5:17; Jas 1:13-15
* Challenges: Jas 1:13-15; Heb 4:15

## 2. Terminology

* Lat. *concupiscentia*; Gk. ἐπιθυμία (*epithymia*) — ‘desire’
* Of itself neutral—can refer to good or bad desires (cf. Gal 5:17)
  + Good desires, e.g., Lk 22:15; Phil 1:23; 1 Thess 2:17
  + Bad desires, e.g., Gal 5:16, 24; 1 Tim 6:9; 2 Tim 2:22; 1 Pet 1:14
* In LXX most often, though not always, neutral or positive
* In NT, most often refers to bad desires
* In historical theology, can refer simply to desire
  + In classic faculty psychology, the ‘concupiscible appetite’ is the instinctive, natural desire to obtain pleasure and avoid pain.
  + Important, because desire itself isn’t sinful: a God-given part of our created nature
* But, in classic Reformed theology, usually refers more narrowly to evil desires[[1]](#footnote-1)
* Today: taking the narrower definition, to consider our evil desires.
* Concupiscence = ‘the disordered state of all appetites’[[2]](#footnote-2)
* Centrally important to Reformation debates
* Sinfulness of concupiscence denied by some within (conservative) evangelicalism today (See Appendix 2)

## 3. Location of the Doctrine

* Original sin
* Two parts of original sin:[[3]](#footnote-3)
* Guilt imputed and punished
  + Born ‘East of Eden’, separated from the tree of life (Gen 3:24-4:2)
  + Subject to death (Gen 4:8 (!!); 5:5, 8, 11, 14, 17, 20, 27, 31; 7:21-23; 9:28-29)
* The comprehensive corruption of our nature
  + Gen 5:1-3
  + What happens if you pollute a river at its source?
  + Gen 4:1-16; 6:5; 8:21
* We are corrupt *because* the guilt of Adam’s sin is imputed, and our corruption in turn deserves further condemnation
* Our focus today: corruption, and especially concupiscence
* The fall brought upon us:

‘blindness, terrible darkness, futility, and distortion of judgment in their minds; perversity, defiance, and hardness in their hearts and wills; and finally impurity in all their emotions’[[4]](#footnote-4)

* Our minds are darkened, foolish, ignorant (Eph 4:18-19)
* Our wills are enslaved, so that we love evil and hate what is good (Jn 8:34)
* Our emotions are in chaos: muddled fears and hatreds, desires and delights, joys and sorrows (Rom 7:5; Gal 5:17, 19-21; Col 3:5-8; Titus 3:3)

# B. The Confessional Protestant Doctrine of Concupiscence

### Lutheran:

Also they teach that since the fall of Adam all men begotten in the natural way are born with sin, that is, without the fear of God, without trust in God, and with concupiscence; and that this disease, or vice of origin, is truly sin, even now condemning and bringing eternal death upon those not born again through Baptism and the Holy Ghost.

They condemn the Pelagians and others who deny that original depravity is sin, and who, to obscure the glory of Christ’s merit and benefits, argue that man can be justified before God by his own strength and reason. (Augsburg Confession, Article 2 [1530])

### Church of England:

ORIGINAL Sin standeth not in the following of *Adam*, (as the *Pelagians* do vainly talk;) but it is the fault and corruption of the Nature of every man, that naturally is ingendered of the offspring of *Adam*; whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and is of his own nature inclined to evil, so that the flesh lusteth always contrary to the spirit; and therefore in every person born into this world, it deserveth God's wrath and damnation. And this infection of nature doth remain, yea in them that are regenerated; whereby the lust of the flesh, called in the Greek, Φρόνημα σαρκός, which some do expound the wisdom, some sensuality, some the affection, some the desire, of the flesh, is not subject to the Law of God. And although there is no condemnation for them that believe and are baptized, yet the Apostle doth confess, that concupiscence and lust hath of itself the nature of sin. (Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion, Article IX [1571])[[5]](#footnote-5)

### Continental Reformed:

[Original sin] is a corruption of the whole human nature—  
an inherited depravity which even infects small infants  
in their mother’s womb,  
and the root which produces in humanity  
every sort of sin.  
It is therefore so vile and enormous in God’s sight  
that it is enough to condemn the human race,  
and it is not abolished  
or wholly uprooted  
even by baptism,  
seeing that sin constantly boils forth  
as though from a contaminated spring. (Belgic Confession, Article 15 [1561])[[6]](#footnote-6)

### Presbyterian; Congregational; Baptist:

4. From this original corruption, whereby we are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil, do proceed all actual transgressions.

5. This corruption of nature, during this life, doth remain in those that are regenerated; and although it be through Christ pardoned and mortified, yet both itself, and all the motions thereof, are truly and properly sin.

6. Every sin, both original and actual, being a transgression of the righteous law of God, and contrary thereunto, doth in its own nature bring guilt upon the sinner, whereby he is bound over to the wrath of God, and curse of the Law, and so made subject to death, with all miseries, spiritual, temporal, and eternal. (Westminster Confession of Faith, 6.4-6 [1646] = Savoy Declaration, 6.4-6 [1658] = Second London Baptist Confession of Faith, 6.4-6 [1689])

# C. History of the Doctrine

## 1. Augustine (See Appendix 1)

## 2. Reformation

* Luther’s Smalcald Articles (1537)
* III.1 ‘Concerning Sin’; III.3 ‘Concerning Repentance’
* From one perspective, the Reformation was an argument over the nature of repentance (cf. 95 Theses!)
* 3 parts to Rome’s doctrine of penance:
  + Contrition – sorrow for sin
  + Confession – to a priest; exhaustive list of all known (actual) sins
    - Absolution commutes eternal penalties into punishments of purgatory
  + Satisfactions – to reduce/remove punishments of purgatory
    - Lord’s prayers, rosaries, pilgrimages
    - Purchasing satisfactions – indulgences, masses
* Luther: the problem with Rome’s system of penance: it doesn’t take sin seriously enough
* Not just that we sin—we are sinners
* The false penance of late medieval Rome doesn’t recognise the depth of our depravity:

From this it must follow that they only do penance for actual sins, such as evil thoughts to which they consent (because evil impulses, lusts and inclinations were not sin), evil words, and evil works (which the free will could well have avoided). (III.3:11)

* Luther lists the pastoral problems with this
  + Creates uncertainty – have I confessed *all* my sins? Have I made sufficient satisfaction?
  + At its heart: ‘they directed the people who came to confession to place confidence in their own works’
  + So some despaired, while others false confidence
  + Yet even those who didn’t believe themselves guilty of actual sins knew themselves to be full of ‘hereditary inborn evil’
* And insists that true repentance and forgiveness begins with understanding the extent of sin
* ‘If you want to repent, then repent in the right way’ (III.3:32) (!)

This repentance is not fragmentary or paltry—like the kind that does penance for actual sins—nor is it uncertain like that kind. It does not debate over what is a sin or what is not a sin. Instead, it simply lumps everything together and says, ‘Everything is pure sin with us…there is a plain, certain despair concerning all that we are, think, say, or do, etc.’ (III.3:36)

* Thus:
  + Contrition is no longer uncertain – we despair of *everything* about ourselves
  + Confession is no longer uncertain – ‘All who confess that everything is pure sin with them embrace all sins, allow no exceptions, and do not forget a single one’
  + Satisfaction is no longer uncertain…
* We therefore cannot offer satisfaction (penance, indulgences, purgatory, etc), and so we are driven to see that we need the blood of the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world (III.3:37)
* This is true of unbelievers and hypocrites (cf. III.3:2)
* It is also true of true believers: ‘This repentance endures among Christians until death, because it struggles with the sin that remains in the flesh throughout life.’ (III.3:40)
* A profoundly pastoral concern: what is true repentance?
* If Luther is correct, in order to confess the gospel faithfully, we must teach the depth of our sinfulness, including the sinfulness of our unwilled inclinations and desires[[7]](#footnote-7)
* Lutheran and Reformed confessions and theologians were consistent with each other on the depth of depravity, and the sinfulness of concupiscence
* Rome disagreed…

## 3. Council of Trent (1545-1563)

* Session 5, ‘Decree on Original Sin’ (1546)
* Rejection of Protestant teaching on concupiscence (esp. Luther, but also Bucer and others), in the background[[8]](#footnote-8)

5. If anyone says that the guilt of original sin is not remitted through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ which is given in baptism, or even asserts that all which pertains to the true essence of sin is not removed, but declares it is only erased and not attributed [*non imputari*]: let him be anathema. For God hates nothing in the reborn, because there is no condemnation for those who are truly buried with Christ by baptism into death, *who do not walk according to the flesh* but, putting off the old person and putting on the new person created according to God, become innocent, stainless, pure, blameless and beloved children of God, *heirs indeed of God and fellow heirs with Christ*, so that nothing at all impedes their entrance into heaven. The holy council confesses and perceives that **in the baptised, concupiscence or a tendency to sin [*fomes*] remains**; since this is left as a form of testing, it cannot harm those who do not give consent but, by the grace of Christ, offer strong resistance; indeed, *that person will be crowned who competes according to the rules*. **This concupiscence the Apostle sometimes calls sin, but the holy council declares that the catholic church has never understood it to be called sin in the sense of being truly and properly such in those who have been regenerated, but in the sense that it is a result of sin and inclines to sin.** If anyone holds a contrary view: let him be anathema.[[9]](#footnote-9)

* Denies justification by the non-imputation of sin
* ‘No condemnation’ entails personal innocence, blamelessness and purity
* Concupiscence remains in the baptised
* Concupiscence is:
  + the result of sin
  + inclines to sin
  + but is not ‘truly and properly sin’ (the Apostle Paul notwithstanding! — cf. Rom 7:7, 14, 17, 20)
  + Rather, concupiscence is a ‘tendency to sin’ (*fomes*, or *fomes peccati* – lit. tinder of sin)
* Note the tight connection between Trent’s rejection of justification by imputation and its understanding of concupiscence.
  + Jedin: ‘The teaching of canon 5 on concupiscence laid the foundation for the subsequent decree on justification’.[[10]](#footnote-10)
* Because ‘no condemnation’ is not by imputation of Christ’s righteousness received by faith alone, and because concupiscence remains in the baptised, in the baptised it cannot be sin
* The current Catholic Catechism maintains Tridentine teaching:

‘Concupiscence stems from the disobedience of the first sin. It unsettles man’s moral faculties and, *without being in itself an offense*, inclines man to commit sins.’[[11]](#footnote-11)

## 4. The Reformed Doctrine of Concupiscence

* Lutheran and Reformed views entirely consistent with one another, against Rome
* E.g., Zanchi:

Concupiscence ‘is both a punishment of the former sin, a sin, and a cause of other sins’[[12]](#footnote-12)

* Turretin:

On the contrary [against ‘the papists’], as we think concupiscence is evil in its root and forbidden by the law, so also all the acts and motions springing from it, whether they follow or precede the formal consent of the will.[[13]](#footnote-13)

* Definition of sin:

‘any want of conformity unto, or transgression of, any law of God, given as a rule to the reasonable creature’ (WLC Q/A. 24 Prooftexts: 1 Jn 3:14; Gal 3:10, 12).

Sin is the transgression of the law, or whatever is in opposition thereto, whether it be the want of righteousness (defectus), or an inclination, or action contrary to the divine law, and so offending God, and subjecting the creature to his eternal wrath, unless forgiveness be obtained for the sake of the Son of God, our Mediator.[[14]](#footnote-14)

* Formally: lack of conformity to God’s law
* Materially: actions *and* inclinationscontrary to the law
  + Desire for an object forbidden by the law
  + Inordinate desire for a good object (e.g., loving one’s children at the expense of loving Christ; loving one’s work at the expense of one’s children; gluttony)
  + Insufficient desire for a good object (e.g., failing to cherish one’s spouse; failing to be thankful for life; failing to take care of one’s health)
* Results in guilt and punishment
* Only remedy: Christ the Mediator
* *Synopsis of a Purer Theology* (‘Leiden Synopsis’):[[15]](#footnote-15)

In Latin ‘to sin’ [*peccare*], like the Greek *hamartanein* and the Hebrew *ḥattah*, literally means to wander from the way or to miss the target; but in this case it means to stray from the precept of God’s law.

In defining actual sin it is usual to follow Augustine (*Against Faustus*, book 22, chapter 27): ‘some deed, word, or desire against the eternal law’. We can accept this definition if we complete the list by adding the word ‘thought’, and if we understand the word ‘desire’ to include the concupiscence of both the will and the affections.[[16]](#footnote-16)

* Distinguish habitual sins and actual sins[[17]](#footnote-17)
* Habitual sin: innate inclination towards/propensity for sin
  + Concupiscence a ‘punitive habit’[[18]](#footnote-18)
* Habitual sin (concupiscence) deserves condemnation
* A vivid illustration:

‘The pup of a wolf is killed, but who can excuse it just because it has not yet killed sheep or wreaked havoc on the flock? Still he is killed for a just reason, for he has a wolf’s nature, and he is going to commit that violence if he is permitted to live.’[[19]](#footnote-19)

* Note the assumption about human nature in the Latin proverb: ‘*homo homini lupus est*’: ‘Man is wolf to man’.
* What are we as sinners? Wolves
* We are corrupt to the very root, infected by sin in every aspect of our being
* Calvin typically vivid

[T]his perversity [ie, the corruption of original sin] never ceases in us, but continually bears new fruits—the works of the flesh that we have already described—just as a burning furnace gives forth flame and sparks, or water ceaselessly bubbles up from a spring…For our nature is not only destitute and empty of good, but so fertile and fruitful of every evil that it cannot be idle. Those who have said that original sin is ‘concupiscence’ have used an appropriate word, if only it be added—something that most will by no means concede—that whatever is in man from the understanding to the will, from the soul even to the flesh, has been defiled and crammed with this concupiscence. Or, to put it more briefly, the whole man is of himself nothing but concupiscence.[[20]](#footnote-20)

* + Comprehensive (can’t be limited to just a part of us, nor to just one kind of sin)
  + Powerful (not just lack of righteousness, but great ‘power and energy’ to bring forth sins)
* Vermigli distinguishes 3 stages, on the basis of Romans 6:12 ‘Let not sin reign in your mortal bodies so as to obey its desires’[[21]](#footnote-21)
  + Stage 1—‘innate desire’ and ‘natural depravity’ (‘*sin’*).
  + Stage 2 (‘continuously emanates’ from sin)— ‘initial affections and impulses toward various misdeeds’ (*its desires*)
  + Stage 3—‘the assent of the will’ leading to ‘action’ (*obedience*, which ‘completes and perfects the sin’)
* Stage 1 is habitual sin; stage 3 is actual sin. What about stage 2?

initial affections…are…intermediate and share in both groups. Insofar as we do desire or long for something through them, they possess an element of actual sin…On the other hand, they have in common with original sin, which is not undertaken deliberately and willfully, the fact that we experience affections of this sort against our will.[[22]](#footnote-22)

## 5. Implications for the Doctrine of Repentance

repentance is a changing of the mind and heart, stirred up in us through the Holy Ghost, by the Word both of the law and the gospel, wherein we grieve from our heart; we detest, we lament, we loathe and bewail, and confess before God all our sins, *and even the corruption of our nature*, as things utterly repugnant (as the law teaches) to the will of God…[[23]](#footnote-23)

* We do not only need to repent of our conscious thoughts and desires and actions[[24]](#footnote-24)

[Godly sorrow] is sorrow for heart-sins, the first outbreaks and risings of sin. Paul grieved for the law in his members (Rom 7:23). The true mourner weeps for the stirrings of pride and concupiscence. He grieves for the “root of bitterness” even though it never blossoms into act. A wicked man may be troubled for scandalous sins; a real convert laments heart-sins.[[25]](#footnote-25)

* Repentance isn’t just turning from sinful acts
* Calvin:

The meaning [of repentance] is that, **departing from ourselves, we turn to God,** and having taken off our former mind, we put on a new. On this account, in my judgment, repentance can thus be well defined: it is **the true turning of our life to God**, a turning that arises from a pure and earnest fear of him; and it consists in the mortification of our flesh and of the old man, and in the vivification of the Spirit.[[26]](#footnote-26)

* Cf. Psalm 51
  + vv. 1-2 – confession of actual sin: ‘transgression’ (פֶּשַׁע ; *pešāʿ*), ‘iniquity’ (עָוֹן ; *ʿāwōn*), ‘sin’ (חַטָּאת ; *ḥaṭṭāʾṯ*)
  + v. 5 – traced back to conception: ‘sin’ (חַטָּאת ; *ḥaṭṭāʾṯ*), ‘iniquity’ (עָוֹן ; *ʿāwōn*).
    - cf. v. 6 – God requires truth and wisdom in the inward being and secret heart
  + vv. 9-10 – ‘Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities; create me in a clean heart, O God…’
  + Sin begins in the heart and repentance flows outwards from the cleansing of the heart
  + Repentance therefore begins with a broken spirit and a contrite heart (v. 17; cf. Joel 2:13), lamenting the state of our hearts, calling on God to cleanse our hearts
* Two Reformation confessions of sin:

Almighty and most merciful Father, we have erred and strayed from thy ways like lost sheep, *we have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts*, we have offended against thy holy laws; we have left undone those things which we ought to have done and we have done those things that we ought not to have done, and there is no health in us…[[27]](#footnote-27)

O eternal God and most merciful Father, we confess and acknowledge here, before your Divine Majesty, that we are miserable sinners, conceived and born in sin and iniquity, so that in us there is no goodness. For the flesh evermore rebels against the spirit, whereby we continually transgress your holy precepts and commandments, and so purchase to our selves, through your just judgment, death and damnation.

Nevertheless, heavenly Father, since we are displeased with ourselves for the sins that we have committed against you, and sincerely repent us of the same, we most humbly ask you, for Jesus Christ’s sake, to show your mercy upon us, to forgive us all our sins, and to increase your Holy Spirit in us. That we, acknowledging from the bottom of our hearts our own unrighteousness, may from now on not only mortify our sinful lusts and affections, but also bring forth such fruits as may be agreeable to your most blessed will…[[28]](#footnote-28)

# D. Exegetical Evaluation

* Key texts: Gen 6:5; 8:21; Ps 51:5; Jer 17:9; Mk 7:20-23; Lk 6:43-45; Eph 2:1-3; Rom 7:7-25; Gal 5:17; Jas 1:13-15

### (a) Lk 6:43-45

* a tree and its fruit

### (b) Gal 5:17

* How should we evaluate desires that are opposed to the Holy Spirit?

### (c) Romans 7:7-25[[29]](#footnote-29)

* v. 7: sin // covetousness (ἐπιθυμία (*epithymia*) / Vulgate: *concupiscentia*)
* The law says, ‘Do not covet’ (οὐκ ἐπιθυμήσεις (*ouk epithymēseis*))
* v. 8: sin produced covetousness (ἐπιθυμία (*epithymia*))
* If ἐπιθυμία (*epithymia*) – evil desire – comes from sin, how can it not be sin?[[30]](#footnote-30)
* v. 8//v.11: sin seizes opportunity through commandment; ‘produced in me all kinds of covetousness’ // kills me
* ἐπιθυμία (*epithymia*) deserves condemnation
* v. 13 Sin dwelling in me produces death and so is shown to be sin, and through the commandment (οὐκ ἐπιθυμήσεις (*ouk epithymēseis*)) becomes sinful beyond measure
* v. 16-17: It is (habitual) sin dwelling in me that produces (actual) sin and death, even against my wishes
* This does not mean I am excused or innocent! Sin dwells in *me*!
* But it does mean that (habitual) sin produces (actual) sin and death *against* my will—even before my will consents to it, my sinful inclinations are sinful (and deserve condemnation)
* v. 19 What I keep doing (against my will!) is evil
* v. 22-23 Although I delight in the law, sin in my members wages war against the law of my mind (and keeps winning!)
* vv. 24-25—This drives me to cry for deliverance, and give thanks for Jesus Christ
* 8:1 In whom there is no condemnation

### (d) James 1:13-15

* v. 13 God does not and cannot tempt[[31]](#footnote-31)
* So where do temptations come from?
* The devil involved (Jas 4:7)
* But problem begins with our passions and desires (2:14; 4:1-3)
* v. 14 ‘lured and enticed’— a fishing metaphor
* Each person is tempted *by his own desires* (τῆς ἰδίας ἐπιθυμίας; *tēs idias epithymias*)
* Objection: It’s not a sin to be tempted!
* Douglas Moo: recognises that ‘Enticement to sin comes from our own sinful natures, not from God (vv. 14-15)’.[[32]](#footnote-32)
* Denies that temptation itself is sin: ‘James implies that temptation, in and of itself, is not sinful. Only when *desire* “conceives”—is allowed to produce offspring—does sin come into being.’[[33]](#footnote-33)
* Ans: Distinguish different kinds of temptation (External vs internal)
* It *is* a sin to tempt[[34]](#footnote-34)
* v. 15 metaphor of conception, birth, growth, death
* desire (ἐπιθυμία ; *epithymia*) conceives and gives birth to sin (ἁμαρτία ; *hamartia*)
* sin when it is fully grown brings forth death
* Objection: but this means ‘desire’ can’t be ‘sin’, because desire must ‘conceive and give birth’ before sin appears
* Ans: Distinguish habitual and actual sin
* ‘sin’ (ἁμαρτία ; *hamartia*) in James always refers to actual sins (1:15; 2:9; 4:17; 5:15, 16, 20)[[35]](#footnote-35)
* Romans 7 has already established that (unless directed and rightly proportioned towards a morally good object) ἐπιθυμία (*epithymia*) has the nature of sin
* If my desires are inclining me to sin, luring and enticing me to sin, and giving birth to sin, they are evil (because they are opposed to the holy, pure and blameless law of God)
* Only evil trees produce evil fruit! (Lk 6:43-45)

we see there is a distinction of concupiscence from actual sin, as of the mother from her daughter, but yet as one serpent conceiveth and bringeth forth another serpent, so both the mother and daughter are sin, and Paul plainly testifieth that concupiscence is sin. Rom 7.7.[[36]](#footnote-36)

* Devil not excluded, but simply fans into flame what is already there:

But though men’s passion [*concupiscentia*] is inflamed by Satan’s bellows, it does not cease to be a furnace in itself. It has the fire burning within itself and it greedily receives the draught of the bellows; and so no excuse is left to the ungodly.[[37]](#footnote-37)

* **Objection:** but Jesus was tempted in every way as we are, yet was without sin (Heb 4:15)
* Diocese of Sydney Doctrine Commission:[[38]](#footnote-38)
* Recognises that James traces temptation back to the individual, and denies that God tempts[[39]](#footnote-39)
* But wrongly infers that temptation is not itself sinful:

Furthermore, this reading of James and Paul together which recognises that temptation is not itself sin and can be resisted is also consistent with Hebrews 4:15, which tells us that Jesus was tempted in every way as we are, and yet was without sin.[[40]](#footnote-40)

* And denies that we need to repent of being tempted

Experiencing temptation is not itself sin – for Jesus, as we have seen, was tempted but did not sin (Heb 4:15). While our temptations (unlike his) often arise from our own fallenness, actual sin only occurs when we fail to resist temptation and allow ourselves to be enticed by our own desires (Jas 1:14-15). Therefore, while we are right to lament our fallen condition, we are not called to repent of temptation but to resist it. Repentance becomes necessary when we yield to temptation.[[41]](#footnote-41)

* A failure to distinguish different kinds of temptation (see below)
* John Stevens:

we can rightly assume that the temptations He experienced were deep emotional experiences in which He *felt the attractions of sin* and the costs of obedience…Hebrews tells us that He was ‘tempted just as we are’, so our own experience of temptation is an accurate analogy to His experience in His human nature. *The only difference* is that we have never felt or experienced temptation with the intensity that He did, because we have never resisted temptation to the uttermost.[[42]](#footnote-42)

### (e) The Temptation of Jesus

* Heb 4:15
  + What is meant by tempted?
  + What is meant by ‘in every way’?
  + How does ‘without sin’ qualify ‘tempted in every way’?

#### (i) The nature of Jesus’ temptations

* Matt 4:1-11; Lk 4:1-13; Mk 14:32-42 and parallels
* Distinguish external and internal temptations
  + But be clear what we mean by ‘external’ – not bouncing off an iron shell
* External in origin (from Satan)
* *Not* arising internally (from his own flesh)
* And *not* evoking in him any desire for sin
* Jesus had no evil desires, because he did not have a sinful nature
  + So his temptations are not like mine in *every way without exception*
* Aquinas explains this clearly.
* Denies the presence of the *fomes peccati* (tinder/stimulant/inclination to sin) in Christ, because he was conceived by the Holy Spirit (Matt 1:20), and so didn’t inherit original sin[[43]](#footnote-43)
* Therefore, he conformed himself completely to the precepts of the law[[44]](#footnote-44)
* And he was only ever inclined to what is good[[45]](#footnote-45)

although He suffered no internal assault on the part of the ‘fomes’ of sin, He sustained an external assault on the part of the world and the devil, and won the crown by overcoming.[[46]](#footnote-46)

* Particularly striking, because Aquinas did not think that the *fomes* was itself sinful.
* But he recognised that having these disordered desires can only come from original sin
* And therefore, because Christ did not inherit original sin, he could not have had even the slightest attraction to sin
* Temptations from the outside:
* But…with real inner purchase
* Because appealing to good natural desires[[47]](#footnote-47)
  + Bread (Matt 4:3) – To eat food when near death
  + Temple (Matt 4:5-6) – To experience powerfully his Father’s loving care
  + Kingdoms (Matt 4:8-9a) – To rule in righteousness as Messiah over the kingdoms God had promised him
  + Gethsemane – To avoid death and the cup of God’s wrath
* Yet *never* in a way contrary to the moral law

#### (ii) Temptation in Hebrews

* The principal temptation in Hebrews:
  + Fear of death (2:15)
  + Tempted to shrink back and apostatise (Heb 2:1-4; 3:7-4:13; 6:4-8; 10:26-31, 35, 39; 12:25-29)
* Craig Koester:

Hebrews focuses on tests that were common to Jesus and his followers, including denunciation, arrest, and abuse (Matt 26:59-68; 27:26-31 par.; Heb 10:32-34; 13:13). Jesus was tested more severely than the listeners had been, since he endured a shameful death (12:2; 13:12) while they had not (12:4).[[48]](#footnote-48)

* He can help us in our weakness (4:15) because he himself was beset with weakness, and so can deal gently with us (5:2)
* What weakness in particular?
* Heb 5:7-10
* Offered up prayers…loud cries and tears…for salvation *from death* (v. 7)
* Clear allusion to Gethsemane (v. 7)[[49]](#footnote-49)
* A legitimate desire to avoid a real evil!
* ‘Yet not my will but yours be done’—therefore a sinless request
* And so, he learned obedience through suffering and was perfected (5:8-9a)
* And is therefore the source of eternal salvation (5:9b)
* Jesus did not experience *evil* desires tempting him.
* He was tempted by *good*, *natural* desires to avoid death

Hebrews does not focus on Jesus being ‘tempted’ to immoral behavior, but on his faithfulness being tested through crucifixion (Heb 5:7-8).[[50]](#footnote-50)

* But he did not yield, and so through his death destroyed the devil (2:14)
* And so, as sympathetic high priest (2:17-18), he can deliver those who are enslaved by fear of death (2:15), and tempted to shrink back and apostatise (Heb 2:1-4; 3:7-4:13; 6:4-8; 10:26-31, 39; 12:25-29)
* And so he can save the Hebrew Christians from apostasy through fear of death
* This does not make Jesus’ temptations somehow less intense or real than ours. Quite the opposite:
  + Heb 12:4 – ‘You have not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood’
  + Contrast Jesus in Gethsemane (Lk 22:44), and in his scourging and crucifixion (NB: the emphasis on Christ’s blood in Hebrews, against the backdrop of the blood of the Levitical sacrifices).[[51]](#footnote-51)
* So, how is Christ able to sympathise?
* If his temptations are so different from ours, what’s the point of contact?
* Christ knows what it’s like to experience intense suffering in resisting his desires
* But we *must* insist that his desires, unlike ours, were holy
* NB: Heb 7:26
  + We need a High Priest who can sympathise with our weakness (2:18; 4:15)
  + But also one who is ‘holy, innocent, unstained, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens.
  + ‘Separated from sinners’ (κεχωρισμένος ἀπὸ τῶν ἁμαρτωλῶν; *kekōṛismenos apo tōn hamartalōn*)
    - Hinge between first 3 terms (‘qualitative separation’ – ‘different from sinners’) and final phrase (‘spatial separation’ – ‘removed from the place of sinners’)[[52]](#footnote-52)
* We need a Saviour who is *like* us, but also utterly *unlike* us!
  + This cuts strongly against the claim that that the NT emphasis is that Jesus’ temptations are the same as ours, because we need to hear that Jesus is sympathetic not that he’s different.[[53]](#footnote-53)
* NB: Christ’s sinless separation from sinners, and exaltation above the heavens is precisely what guarantees us access to the throne of grace
  + He did not need to offer sacrifices for his own sins (contrast Aaronic High Priests (7:27; cf. 5:3)
  + His blood secures eternal redemption, purifies our consciences (9:12-14)
  + He has entered the heavenly places *on our behalf* (9:24)
  + We therefore can draw near by the blood of Jesus with true hearts, full assurance, and clean consciences (10:19-25)
* The tragic irony: by seeking to remove the gap between Jesus’ experience of temptation and my experience of temptation, I deprive myself of the assurance of a Saviour
* A well-meaning, but therapeutic desire to make Jesus’ temptations exactly like my temptations
* Unintentionally, pastorally cruel and disastrous
* If held consistently, it is in fact theologically blasphemous (would make Jesus a sinner with filthy desires)
* And in fact only ‘works’ for bourgeoise respectable sins
  + E.g., ‘Jesus felt a strong emotional attraction to…torturing children?...domestic violence?...gang rape?...etc

# E. Theological and Pastoral Implications

# 1. The Importance of Theological Method

* Scripture is the supreme, sufficient, and clear ultimate authority – the ‘norming norm’
* But, the Lord Jesus has given teachers to the Church (Eph 4:11; cf Ps 145:4)
* Just ‘me and my Bible’ is insufficient
* Historic Reformed confessions *under* Scripture
* But with ministerial authority over us to guide us in faithful reading of Scripture (*normed* norms)
* The pastoral importance of historical theology for better reading of Scripture
* Short evangelical statements of faith can’t do everything
  + Useful for broader unity in certain circumstances
  + Ultimately we need something more substantial to help us understand key doctrines more fully
* If the entire Reformed (and Lutheran) confessional tradition takes a consistent position on a doctrine…how likely is it that you know better?

# 2. The Depth of Sin

* Urgent importance of (recovering) the doctrine of original sin
* Ps 51:5 – sin and iniquity goes all the way back to my conception; all the way down to the deepest and most hidden recesses of my heart
* One pressing contemporary issue: Same-sex attraction is sinful, even if its presence in someone’s life is unwanted and loathed
* But includes any illicit sexual attraction
* And any instinct, disposition, inclination, propensity, attraction, desire contrary in any way to God’s holy law: unlawful anger (including the first stirrings of irritation), gluttony, envy, pride, apathy, despair, and much, much more
* How can this be pastoral?

# 3. Dealing with guilt and shame

* A common concern – that calling concupiscence sin will make people feel ashamed, especially if struggling with same-sex attraction
* But shame is not a bad thing![[54]](#footnote-54)

‘that they may be ashamed of their iniquities’ (Ezek. 43:10). Blushing is the colour of virtue. When the heart has been made black with sin, grace makes the face red with blushing: ‘I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face’ (Ezra 9:6). The repenting Prodigal was so ashamed of his excess that he thought himself not worthy to be called a son any more (Luke 15:11). Repentance causes a holy bashfulness…Adam never blushed in the time of innocency.[[55]](#footnote-55)

* The response of a guilty conscience (cf. Gen 3:7-10)
* Self-soothing?
  + In Middle Ages, the concern was guilt and punishment
    - Luther’s diagnosis: medieval understanding of sin and the penitential system threw the sinner back on their own resources
  + In 21st century, the concern is shame and self-esteem
  + Semi-pelagianism in a therapeutic key
* Pile it up in a heap, call it all sin, and take it to the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. (Luther, Smalcald Articles)
* We need Christ’s propitiating and cleansing blood, and his perfect righteousness imputed to us by faith
* ‘the more we understand the doctrine of concupiscence, the more we understand the gospel’.[[56]](#footnote-56)
* Anything that leads me to self-soothe, hinders a deeper and richer appreciation of Christ and his benefits

# 4. Repentance

* Repentance is more than simply turning from actual sins
  + Requires: a clear sight of sin; godly sorrow for sin; confession of sin; shame for sin; hatred of sin; turning from sin[[57]](#footnote-57)
* Turning from sin begins with seeking the cleansing of our hearts (Ps 51:10
* We need to repent of concupiscence as well as of actual sins (Ps 51)
* Properly repenting of actual sins includes tracing those sins back to our evil hearts (Ps 51)
* Repentance means killing vice, by the Spirit, and putting on virtue (e.g., Rom 6:1-14; 8:13; Col 3:5-17)
* Great danger of saying, e.g., same-sex attraction isn’t sin
  + Leads to settling down with sin in one’s life
  + If I don’t hate what is earthly in me, and recognise it as sin, I’ll never put it to death
  + Unmortified sin will *always* break out
  + Makes the battle with sin *much* harder
* Diagnostic questions:
  + Is it okay to identify as a ‘gay Christian’ or a ‘same-sex attracted Christian’?
  + What about ‘a bitter Christian’ or ‘a misogynistic Christian’ or ‘a racist Christian’?

# 5. Sanctification

* Not a project that is within my control
* Not just changes of behaviour or managing behaviour
* We have been baptised into Christ’s death and resurrection (6:3-4)
  + *So that* we might walk in newness of life (6:4); cf. Christ (v. 10)
  + Our old self *was* crucified (6:6); cf. Christ (v. 10)
  + We are therefore no longer enslaved to sin (6:6-7)
* Therefore:
  + Consider (6:11; 1st imperative in Rom)
  + Mortify: Do not let sin reign (6:12); do not present members to sin
  + Vivify: Present selves to God and members to God as instruments of righteousness (6:13)
* Need for the Spirit to war against the flesh, mortify sin, and produce the fruit of godly desires (Rom 8:13; Gal 5:17-24; Phil 2:12-13
* The possibility of growth and change
* But: sanctification only takes place through a process that involves consistent failure

# 6. Our Glorious Future Hope

* Jesus never experienced these evil desires. And when he returns and we see God face to face, we will be perfectly conformed to his likeness (Rom 8:29; 1 Jn 3:2)

# 7. Is this a doctrine it’s okay for evangelicals to disagree on?

* How should we evaluate the fact that this was a dividing line at the Reformation and for subsequent generations of Protestants?
* What are the theological implications of getting the doctrine wrong? How does it relate to other doctrines?
* What are the pastoral implications of getting the doctrine wrong?
* What level of importance should we attach to contemporary evangelical disagreements over the doctrine? Is it something evangelicals can just agree to differ over?

# Appendix 1: Augustine on Concupiscence[[58]](#footnote-58)

* Looms large over subsequent debates
  + a contested legacy
  + neither entirely consistent nor perfectly clear
* ‘Concupiscence…was central to Augustine’s thinking on original sin’.[[59]](#footnote-59)
* Timo Nisula notes its connection to consideration of God’s justice, explanations of sin and evil, virtues and emotions, and God’s grace and its effect in the baptised.[[60]](#footnote-60)
* Augustine’s account of concupiscence developed over time[[61]](#footnote-61)
* Nisula: ‘both consistency and development’[[62]](#footnote-62)
* Terminology:
  + Nisula notes ‘relative synonymy’ in Augustine between three terms for ‘evil desire’: *conscupiscentia*, *cupiditas*, *libido*.[[63]](#footnote-63) But *concupiscentia* is the most frequently used, and is the ‘standard term’ for evil desire in Augustine.[[64]](#footnote-64)
  + *cupiditas* and *libido* are used in pagan classical literature. But *concupiscentia* is a Christian coinage, drawn from the Latin Bible (e.g., Rom 7:8; 13:14; Gal 5:17; Jas 1:14). Before Augustine, the word is used by Tertullian, Cyprian and Ambrose.[[65]](#footnote-65)
* Concupiscencethe punishment for Adam and Eve’s disobedience:[[66]](#footnote-66)
* A just punishment:
  + Adam and Eve disobey God, therefore they are punished with disobedient flesh
  + Adam and Eve desire what is not theirs, therefore they are infected with evil desires
* The root of sin (1 Tim 6:10)
* A threefold evil (1 Jn 2:16): concupiscence of the flesh; concupiscence of the eyes; pride of life[[67]](#footnote-67)
  + Lust of domination; lust of the eyes; sensuality (*Confessions* III.vii(16))
  + Sexual lust (*Confessions* X.xxx(41-42))
  + Gluttony (*Confessions* X.xxx(42)-xxxi(47))— ‘I struggle every day against uncontrolled desire in eating and drinking’
  + Aesthetic sensual pleasures (*Confessions* X.xxxii(48)-xxxv(57))—‘this immense jungle full of traps and dangers’
  + Pride (*Confessions* X.xxxvi(58)-xl(65)
* But most often Augustine focuses on sexual lust (e.g., *City of God*, XIV)
* So: concupiscence is…
  + A punishment for sin
  + A cause of sin
* Key question: is concupiscence itself sin?
* Nisula:[[68]](#footnote-68)
  + Early works: concupiscence is mainly a problem for the unbaptised
  + As his career develops, ‘a growing awareness’ that concupiscence remains a problem ‘after one has received grace’
  + *But*, for the Christians, concupiscence is ‘a fully resistible and weakened force of residual sin’. The Christian’s ‘sparring partner’. A ‘tamed beast’. An ‘interior opponent’, but one the Christian is equipped by grace to deal with.
  + Jesse Couenhoven disagrees with this last point:

It seems to me that the converse is true: Augustine more and more plays up human helplessness before the distorted longings within ourselves, only to play up also the efficacy of God's grace, especially the operative graces that can be added to baptism, such as that of perseverance.[[69]](#footnote-69)

* Keys to transformation of A’s view:
  + a new interpretation of Romans 7 (as describing the life of a Christian);
  + the Pelagian controversy

## b. Is Concupiscence Sin? (Augustine’s Mature View)

### *On Marriage and Concupiscence* (AD 419-20)[[70]](#footnote-70)

Now this concupiscence, this law of sin which dwells in our members, to which the law of righteousness forbids allegiance, saying in the words of the apostle, “Let not sin, therefore, reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in the lusts thereof; neither yield your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin:” [Rom 6:12-13] — this concupiscence, I say, which is cleansed only by the sacrament of regeneration, does undoubtedly, by means of natural birth, pass on the bond of sin to a man's posterity, unless they are themselves loosed from it by regeneration. In the case, however, of the regenerate, concupiscence is not itself sin any longer, whenever they do not consent to it for illicit works, and when the members are not applied by the presiding mind to perpetrate such deeds. So that, if what is enjoined in one passage, ‘You shall not covet’ [*non concupisces*;Ex 20:17:], is not kept, that at any rate is observed which is commanded in another place, ‘You shall not go after your concupiscences’. [Sirach 18:30] Inasmuch, however, as by a certain manner of speech it is called sin, since it arose from sin, and, when it has the upper hand, produces sin, the guilt of it prevails in the natural man; but this guilt, by Christ's grace through the remission of all sins, is not suffered to prevail in the regenerate man, if he does not yield obedience to it whenever it urges him to the commission of evil. As arising from sin, it is, I say, called sin, although in the regenerate it is not actually sin; and it has this designation applied to it, just as speech which the tongue produces is itself called ‘*tongue*’; and just as the word ‘*hand*’ is used in the sense of writing, which the hand produces. In the same way concupiscence is called sin, as producing sin when it conquers the will. (*On Marriage and Concupiscence*, I.25(22))

So:

* Concupiscence *is* sin in the unbaptised
* Concupiscence is cleansed in baptism (‘the sacrament of regeneration’)
* Therefore, concupiscence is no longer sin in the regenerate
* Concupiscence arises from sin, and produces sin, but it is not sin (although, improperly, it can be called sin)
* In what sense is it not sin?
* Because guilt is taken away
* ‘the guilt of still indwelling concupiscence is taken away’, so that ‘it is no longer imputed as sin’ (1.29(27))
* Nevertheless, Augustine continues:

The apostle then adds these words: ‘For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwells no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perfect that which is good I find not.’ [Rom 7:18] Now this is said, because a good thing is not then perfected, when there is an absence of evil desires, as evil is perfected when evil desires are obeyed. But when they are present, but are not obeyed, neither evil is performed, since obedience is not yielded to them; nor good, because of their inoperative presence. There is rather an intermediate condition of things: good is effected in some degree, because the evil concupiscence has gained no assent to itself; and in some degree there is a remnant of evil, because the concupiscence is present. This accounts for the apostle's precise words. He does not say, To *do* good is not present to him, but ‘how to perfect it’. For the truth is, one *does* a good deal of good when he does what the Scripture enjoins, ‘Go not after your lusts’; [Sirach 18:30] yet he falls short of perfection, in that he fails to keep the great commandment, ‘You shall not covet’. [*non concupisces*; Ex 20:7] The law said, ‘You shall not covet’, in order that, when we find ourselves lying in this diseased state, we might seek the medicine of Grace, and by that commandment know both in what direction our endeavours should aim as we advance in our present mortal condition, and to what a height it is possible to reach in the future immortality. For unless perfection could somewhere be attained, this commandment would never have been given to us. (*On Marriage and Concupiscence*, I.32 (29))

* The presence of concupiscence gives rise to ‘an intermediate condition’, where ‘good is not perfected’, but ‘evil is not performed’.
* i.e., evil desires are *present* in the Christian’s flesh but evil is not *performed* when evil desires are not obeyed
* Good is effected to some degree, but not ‘perfected’
  + Augustine’s Latin version of Romans 7:18 has *perficere* (*perficio* – to perfect); contrast Gk κατεργάζομαι (*katergazomai*)– to work, prepare, carry)
* One command of ‘Scripture’ (Sirach 18:30) is obeyed
* *But* because of concupiscence, the baptised person fails to keep the tenth commandment! (You shall not covet)
* In this life, Christians are in a (morally) ‘diseased state’
* The presence of concupiscence drives us to ‘seek the medicine of grace’
* Perfection will not be achieved in this mortal life, but will be achieved in the life to come
* Nisula: Augustine treats concupiscence as the Christian’s ‘sparring partner’
* Concupiscence is powerful
* But God’s grace is more powerful

### Summary:

* In the unbaptised, concupiscence is, of itself, sin
* In the baptised, conscupiscence is not sin *in the sense that it has been cleansed and its guilt is not imputed*
* It does however remain in the baptised
* If we fail to obey the tenth commandment, can we really be said to be free of sin?
* Is Augustine’s position here a bit confused?
* Nisula suggests this reading:

What emerges from this account is the following: baptism removes all guilt for every kind of sin, and this applies also to *concupiscentia*. Augustine treats sin (*peccatum*) here in terms of juridical liability. If such a liability is annulled, the existence of the original cause means nothing.’[[71]](#footnote-71)

* What will be the doctrinal key that unlocks this puzzle?

### *Against Julian* (421-22)[[72]](#footnote-72)

* Debates against Pelagian bishop, Julian of Eclanum (from 419)
* Forces Augustine to clarify his position
* In Book 5, chapter 3, against Julian’s claim that ‘the disobedience of the flesh’ must be good, because it is a punishment of sin[[73]](#footnote-73)
* Augustine gives examples of things that are simultaneously punishments of sin and sins themselves:
* e.g., the spiritual blindness of the Jews of Jesus’ day, which was a punishment (‘a partial hardening’; Rom 11:25), a sin (‘the immense evil of their unbelief’) and a cause of sin (because they were blind, they put Christ to death).

In like manner, the concupiscence of the flesh against which a good spirit lusts is not only a sin, because it is disobedience against the dominion of the mind—as well as punishment for sin, because it has been reckoned as the wages of disobedience—but also a cause of sin, in the failure of him who consents to it or in the contagion of birth. (*Against Julian*, 5.3(8)).

* Greater clarity in Augustine’s position?
* Concupiscence is:
  + A punishment for sin
  + A cause of sin
  + *And* itself a sin, ‘because it is disobedience against the dominion of the mind’
* Cf. Zanchi, ‘concupiscence…is both a punishment of the former sin, a sin and a cause of other sins’[[74]](#footnote-74)
* A greater forensic emphasis?[[75]](#footnote-75)
  + Guilt/accusation (*reatus*) has been forgiven, and therefore punishment removed, even as evil desires remain (cf. *Against Julian*, VI.62)[[76]](#footnote-76)

## Appendix 2. Contemporary Evangelical Confusion over the Doctrine of Concupiscence

* Various examples: some popular-level, some more academic
* Others are available!
* Some outright denials; some confusions; distinguish what mistakes are being made, and to what extent
* The purpose is not to single out individuals, but to illustrate that mistakes on the doctrine of concupiscence are endemic to large parts of conservative, reformed evangelicalism
* Importance of engaging issues, and authors, fairly, dispassionately, graciously
  + *No!* to social media pile-ons
  + Focus on arguments
  + But: willingness to critique those in our own ‘tribe’
* Not just: is this person believing and teaching the gospel. Also important to ask, if left unchecked, where will this lead the next generation? In 20-30 years, will the evangelical church in the West still be confessing the gospel?

## A. Popular Level Writing

### 1. John Stevens, *The Fight of Your Life*

* Pastoral concern: to avoid introspection and despair by calling unwanted desires and feelings (including but not limited to sexual ones) sinful[[77]](#footnote-77)
* ‘as human beings we all experience an emotional attraction to rebellion and disobedience which is not itself sin’[[78]](#footnote-78)
  + NB: this appears to go well beyond even early Augustine and Trent in applying this to all human beings, not just Christians

All Christians experience temptation, but temptation is not itself sin. The proper response to temptation is resistance rather than repentance. Experiencing temptation does not make us guilty before God and in need of his cleansing mercy and forgiveness.[[79]](#footnote-79)

* On James 1:13-15

These verses make clear that there is a step between temptation and sin, which is captured by the metaphor of giving birth. The desire which is evil has the potential to become sin, but this is not inevitable. There is a chain of causation from temptation to desire, desire to sin, and sin to death.[[80]](#footnote-80)

* + There is such a thing as a desire that is ‘evil’, but is not ‘sin’
* Jesus’ temptations exactly like ours, except more intense:

we can rightly assume that the temptations He experienced were deep emotional experiences in which He *felt the attractions of sin* and the costs of obedience…Hebrews tells us that He was tempted just as we are’, so our own experience of temptation is an accurate analogy to His experience in His human nature. *The only difference* is that we have never felt or experienced temptation with the intensity that He did, because we have never resisted temptation to the uttermost.[[81]](#footnote-81)

* Comment: the claim that Jesus felt deep emotional attractions to sin that differ from our temptations only by being more intense is utterly extraordinary. If held thoughtfully and consistently, a denial of the Son of God’s perfect sinlessness. Hard to avoid the conclusion that it’s unintentionally blasphemous.
* Although same-sex acts and lusts are sinful,

there is [*sic*] no grounds to conclude that a person is sinning merely because they experience unwanted and unencouraged attraction towards people of the same sex…a Christian is not rendered a sinner simply because they experience feelings that they fight and refuse to express.[[82]](#footnote-82)

### 2. Sam Allberry, *Is God Anti-Gay?*

All of us experience fallen sexual desires, whether those desires are for the same sex or for the opposite sex. It is not un-Christian to experience same-sex attraction any more than it is un-Christian to get sick.[[83]](#footnote-83)

* Clear that mentally acting on our desires is sinning, and that ‘although unchosen, our temptations come from our own fallen hearts’.[[84]](#footnote-84)
* ‘But this is not the same as saying *the presence of temptation* itself is a sin to be repented of.’[[85]](#footnote-85)
* Temptation is to be resisted, not repented of.
* Motivated by pastoral concern:

But we need to be careful not to imply that a Christian who is experiencing such temptation [in context: specifically same-sex attraction] is in sin merely for experiencing the temptation. Temptation reminds us that we still have a sinful nature and we long for the day to come when no temptations at all will be present in our lives.

How we articulate all this is very important. The sincere Christian who is deeply distressed at the temptations he or she is facing may be crushed by the idea that by merely having the capacity to be tempted in this way they are thereby sinning.[[86]](#footnote-86)

### 3. Andrew Walker, *God and the Transgender Debate*

* arguing that ‘Gender dysphoria is not sinful’[[87]](#footnote-87)

It is vital to pause here to make very clear a distinction between experiencing a feeling and acting on a feeling…[Like Eve’s desire for the fruit in Gen 3] individuals who experience gender dysphoria are not sinning when such experiences occur. To feel that your body is one sex and your self is a different gender is not sinful. The Bible nowhere categorizes unwanted psychological distress as sinful in itself. This experience is a sign that all of our selves are as broken by sin as the creation around us is.[[88]](#footnote-88)

* A sign that creation is fallen

But *deciding* to let that feeling rule—to feed that feeling so that it becomes the way you see yourself and the way you identify yourself and the way you act—is sinful, because it is *deciding* that your feelings will have authority over you and will define what is right and wrong.[[89]](#footnote-89)

* Note the key issue here: choice—*deciding*
* Actual sins are sin, but habitual sin (inclination/propensity) is not sinful

### 4. Garrett Kell on Sin and Temptation

Reid was plagued by anger. In heated moments, he had an impulse to punch tables—or worse, people. His background as a brawler was difficult to escape. But just because he was tempted with outbursts of anger didn’t mean he was sinning.[[90]](#footnote-90)

* Claims that ‘Be angry and do not sin’ (Eph 4:26) is what Reid needs to hear (!)
* Uses the example of Jesus’ temptations to show that temptation and sin are not the same, but without distinguishing types of temptation

Feeling anger doesn’t necessitate being bitter, cursing, punching, or murdering. Being tempted with wrongful attraction doesn’t need to lead to lust, masturbation, or adultery. Considering sin doesn’t have to mean conceding to it. Knowing this keeps you from being crippled by unnecessary guilt; it gives hope to keep fighting, even when temptation is raging. It is possible, by the power of the Spirit, to be tempted by sin and not give in (Rom. 6)

* Comment: True that there is a distinction between being tempted and giving in
* Attempts to clarify the doctrine of concupiscence:

This does not deny the fact that sinful desires are sin. For instance, feeling sexual attraction toward a member of the same sex is evidence of our fallen nature. If one resists giving in to unnatural desires, they are not sinning and do not need to feel perpetually displeasing to God.

* Comment: a misstep to imply that there is no guilt (displeasing to God) that comes with our sinful desires
* Guilt (and God’s displeasure) is removed only by Christ’s death for our sins and his and righteousness imputed to us
* The illustration of ‘Reid’ concedes far too much

## B. More Academic Writing:

### 1. Douglas Moo, *James*

* Recognises that in James 2, ‘Enticement to sin comes from our own sinful natures, not from God (vv. 14-15)’.[[91]](#footnote-91)

‘James implies that temptation, in and of itself, is not sinful. Only when *desire* “conceives”—is allowed to produce offspring—does sin come into being. The point is an important one, for some extremely sensitive Christians may feel that the fact of their continuing to experience temptation demonstrates that they are out of fellowship with the Lord.[[92]](#footnote-92)

* Thus, concupiscence not sinful
* Appears unaware of the historical and theological questions
* Note the pastoral concern
* But note also the implied soteriology! I have fellowship with the Lord in Christ, who has satisfied God’s wrath at my sin, and in whose righteousness I am clothed.
* Sensitive Christians – *all* Christians – need to be directed outside of themselves, to Christ!

### 2. Robert Gagnon, *The Bible and Homosexual Practice*

Like any desire for what God has forbidden, the desire for same-sex intercourse can also be a sin but only if consciously nurtured and ‘fed’. The mere inclination or the experience of temptation is not sin. The issue is whether one is mastered by the desire.[[93]](#footnote-93)

* And: ‘What matters is not what urges individuals feel, but what they do with these urges.’[[94]](#footnote-94)
* Of course, right to make the distinction between having an inclination or desire and being mastered by the desire
* Wrong to assert the desire is not sin
* It matters what urges someone feels!

### 3. Sydney Diocesan Doctrine Commission, *The Doctrine of Concupiscence and Same-Sex Attraction*

* Affirm and articulate the doctrine of the XXXIX Articles
* Ground it in Scripture
* But confused and confusing on temptation, sin and repentance

Although same-sex sexual attraction is a result of the Fall and a manifestation of concupiscence (and so has the nature of sin), having a propensity for such attractions should not be equated with the commission of *actual sin*. Experiencing temptation is not itself sin – for Jesus, as we have seen, was tempted by did not sin (Heb 4:15). While our temptations (unlike his) often arise from our own fallenness, actual sin only occurs when we fail to resist temptation and allow ourselves to be enticed by our own desires (Jas 1:14-15). Therefore, while we are right to lament our fallen condition, we are not called tor epent of temptation but to resist it. Repentance becomes necessary when we yield to temptation.[[95]](#footnote-95)

* Right that same-sex attraction is a manifestation of concupiscence, and to distinguish same-sex attraction from *actual sin* (though the report does not explicitly state the distinction between habitual and actual sin, and so creates a potentially misleading ambiguity)
* Confuses the question by bringing in Jesus’ temptations to prove that experiencing temptation is not sin.
  + *Some* temptations are not sin. Same-sex temptations *are* sin. Jesus never experienced this kind of temptation – because he was sinless
* Wrong to deny the need for repentance

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1. Turretin distinguishes natural concupiscence (the concupiscible appetite which in and of itself is neither morally good nor evil); morally good concupiscence (desire for a lawful object); and morally evil concupiscence (desire for an ‘unjust and unlawful object’. Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, ed. James T. Dennison, trans. George Musgrave Giger, 3 vols (Phillipsburg: P&R Publishing, 1992), 11.21.1. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, ed. John Bolt, trans. John Vriend, 4 vols (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), III.98. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. I am working here with a broad definition of original sin. More narrowly, original sin refers to the hereditary corruption of our nature; cf. Calvin, *Inst.* II.i.8. But as Garry Williams notes, ‘In practice, the term is used more loosely’, to include both the innate corruption of the heart and the imputation of Adam’s sin and guilt to his descendants. Garry Williams, ‘Total Depravity and God’s Covenant with Adam (2): The Imputation of Adam’s Sin’, in *Ruined Sinners to Reclaim: Sin and Depravity in Historical, Biblical, Theological, and Pastoral Perspective*, ed. David Gibson and Jonathan Gibson (Wheaton: Crossway, 2024), 591–92. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Canons of Dort, III-IV.1. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Article IX is identical to Article VIII of the Forty-Two Articles of 1553 (a new Article V, ‘Of the Holy Ghost’, was added in 1571). [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Cf. Heidelberg Catechism, questions 10, 109, 113. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Cf. Wedgeworth, ‘Heart Wants’, 667: ‘the more we understand the doctrine of concupiscence, the more we understand the gospel’. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Hubert Jedin, *A History of the Council of Trent. Volume II: The First Sessions at Trent, 1545-47*, trans. Ernest Graf (Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1961), 144. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Norman P. Tanner, ed., *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils. Volume II: Trent to Vatican II* (London: Sheed & Ward, 1990), 667; italics original; bold emphasis mine. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Jedin, *History of the Council of Trent*, 162. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2515; italics mine. In discussing original sin, the Catechism refers to concupiscence as an ‘inclination to evil’ (405). The Catechism’s teaching is explicitly rooted in the decrees of the Council of Trent. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Girolamo Zanchi, *Confession of the Christian Religion*, VIII.v. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Turretin, *Institutes*, 11.21.10. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Zacharias Ursinus, *Commentary on the Heidelberg Catechism*, trans. G. W. Williard, Reprint (Phillipsburg: P&R Publishing, 1852), 37. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. I cite the Latin-English edition in what follows. The same translation can be found in a much cheaper English only edition. William den Boer and Reimer A. Faber, eds., *Synopsis of a Purer Theology. Volume I: Disputations 1-31*, trans. Reimer A. Faber (Davenant Press, 2023). [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Roelf T. te Velde and Willem J. van Asselt, eds., *Synopsis Purioris Theologiae / Synopsis of a Purer Theology. Latin Text and English Translation: Volume 1, Disputations 1-23*, vol. 1 (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 16.2-3. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Turretin, *Institutes*, 11.21.2; Velde and Asselt, *Synopsis Purioris Theologiae*, Disputation 15 ‘On Original Sin’ and Disputation 16 ‘On Actual Sin’. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Jörn Müller, quoted in Nisula, *Functions*, 10. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Peter Martyr Vermigli, *Original Sin*, trans. Kirk Summers (Davenant Press, 2019), 20. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Calvin, *Inst.*,II.i.8. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Peter Martyr Vermigli, *Common places: On free will and the law*, trans. Joseph A. Tipton (Landrum: Davenant Press, 2021), 66. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Vermigli, 66–67. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Zanchi, *Confession of the Christian Religion*, XVIII.5; my italics; spelling modernised. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Contrary to John Stevens, *Fight of Your Life*, 20; Sydney Diocesan Doctrine Commission. ‘The Doctrine of Concupiscence and Its Relevance to the Experience of Same-Sex Attraction: A Report by the Sydney Diocesan Doctrine Commission’, 6.4. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Thomas Watson, *The Doctrine of Repentance* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1987), 19. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Calvin, *Inst.* III.iii.5; emphasis mine. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Thomas Cranmer’s General Confession at Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer, *Book of Common Prayer*. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. John Knox, ‘The Confession of Our Sins’ from *Form of Prayers* 1556; *Book of Common Order* 1564, in Mark Earngey and Jonathan Gibson, eds., *Reformation Worship: Liturgies from the Past for the Present* (Greensboro, NC: New Growth Press, 2018), 569–70. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. For a recent detailed defence of reading the ‘I’ of Romans 7:14-25 as Paul’s experience as a Christian, see Will N. Timmins, *Romans 7 and Christian Identity: A Study of the ‘I’ in Its Literary Context* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019). [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. Cf. Mark Seifrid, quoted in Timmins, *Romans 7*, 151, n. 59: ‘Paul does not speak of passions that produce sins; the reality of sin is prior to our passions and produces them’. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Allison notes that James is refuting a possible wrong inference from v. 12 – that God tempts to evil. NB πειρασμός (*peirasmos*; vv. 2, 12) can mean both ‘test’ or ‘trial’, and ‘temptation’, and so clarification is needed. Dale C. Allison, *James: A Critical and Exegetical Commentary*, ICC (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2013), 237. Cf. Moo: ‘while God may test or prove his servants in order to strengthen their faith, he never seeks to induce sin and destroy their faith’, citing as examples of God testing people, Gen 22:1; Jdg 2:22; 2 Chron 32:31 cf 2 Ki 20:12-19. Douglas J. Moo, *The Letter of James*, PNTC (Leicester: Apollos, 2000), 73. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. Moo, *James*, 72. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. Moo, *James*, 75. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. Matthew P. W. Roberts, *Pride: Identity and the Worship of Self* (Fearn, Ross-Shire: Christian Focus, 2023), 76. Cf. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, I.48.5 ad 3: ‘Insofar as temptation implies an incitement to evil, there is always a sinful evil (*malum culpae*) in anyone who is doing the tempting’. (The translation is that of Alfred J. Fredosso; <https://www3.nd.edu/~afreddos/summa-translation/Part%201/st1-ques01.pdf>.) [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. Denny Burk, ‘Is Homosexual Orientation Sinful?’, *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 58, no. 1 (2015): 106, n. 28. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. W. Fulke, *Confutation of the Rhemish Testament*, New York (1834), quoted in Allison, *James*, 218, n. 22. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. John Calvin, *The Gospel According to St. John 11-21 and the First Epistle of John*, trans. T. H. L. Parker (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 256. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. Sydney Diocesan Doctrine Commission, ‘The Doctrine of Concupiscence and Its Relevance to the Experience of Same-Sex Attraction: A Report by the Sydney Diocesan Doctrine Commission’, 2022. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. Sydney Diocesan Doctrine Commission, ‘Doctrine of Concupiscence’, 3.21. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. Sydney Diocesan Doctrine Commission, ‘Doctrine of Concupiscence’, 3.23. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. Sydney Diocesan Doctrine Commission, ‘Doctrine of Concupiscence’, 6.5. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. John Stevens, *The Fight of Your Life: Facing & Resisting Temptation* (Fearn, Ross-Shire: Christian Focus Publications, 2019), 29; italics mine. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. *ST* III.15.2. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. *ST* III.40.4 corp. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. *ST* III.41.4. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. *ST* III.15.2. ad 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. Cf. John of Damascus, *On the Orthodox Faith*, trans. Norman Russell (Yonkers: St Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2022), §67; Aquinas, *ST* III.41.4. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. Craig R. Koester, *Hebrews: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB (New York: Doubleday, 2001), 283. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, Rev. ed., NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 126–29; David Peterson, *Hebrews: An Introduction and Commentary*, TNTC (London: IVP, 2020), 140–42; contra Harold W. Attridge, *The Epistle to the Hebrews: A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews*, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress press, 1989), 148; William L. Lane, *Hebrews*, 2 vols, WBC (Waco: Word, 1991), I.120. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. Koester, *Hebrews*, 283. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. Heb 2:14; 9:7, 12, 13, 14, 18, 19, 20, 22, 25; 10:4, 19, 29; 11:28; 12:24; 13:11, 12, 20. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. Koester, *Hebrews*, 367. Cf. Paul Ellingworth, *The Epistle to the Hebrews: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 394. Bruce reads it as referring only to qualitative separation. Bruce, *Hebrews*, 176. Others read it as being connected only to the final phrase. Attridge, *Hebrews*, 212; Peterson, *Hebrews*, 184; Lane, *Hebrews*, I.192. In the end, nothing significant hangs on the decision, as the meaning and progress of the verse – from Christ’s sinless purity, to his heavenly exaltation – remains the same however one takes the phrase, ‘separated from sinners’. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. As made by Andy Robinson, in a Living Out seminar, ‘Theological, Pastoral and Cultural Reflections on Concupiscence’. <https://www.livingout.org/resources/talks/22/theological-pastoral-and-cultural-reflections-on-concupiscence>. Accessed 8 April 2024. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. See Te-Li Lau, *Defending Shame: Its Formative Power in Paul’s Letters* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2020). [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. Watson, *Repentance*, 37. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. Wedgeworth, ‘Heart Wants’, 667. [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. Watson, *Repentance*, 15-59. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. See esp. Timo Nisula, *Augustine and the Functions of Concupiscence*, Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae, v. 116 (Leiden: Brill, 2012); also Peter Burnell, ‘Concupiscence’, in Allan D. Fitzgerald and John C. Cavadini, eds., *Augustine through the Ages: An Encyclopedia* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 224–27; Stephen Wedgeworth, ‘The Heart Wants What It Wants: A Protestant Assessment of the Doctrine of Concupiscence’, in *Ruined Sinners to Reclaim: Sin and Depravity in Historical, Biblical, Theological, and Pastoral Perspective*, ed. David Gibson and Jonathan Gibson (Wheaton: Crossway, 2024), 636–47. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. Burnell, ‘Concupiscence’, 224. In a search across Augustine’s writings, Nisula found 1760 uses of *concupiscentia*, 1180 for *cupiditas* and 983 for *libido*. For the verb *concupisco*, he found 1312 instances. [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. Nisula, *Functions*, 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. Nisula suggests a three-part periodisation: early works (from 390s), ‘mature and complete’ treatments of concupiscence (400s onwards), and Augustine’s defence of his ‘mature’ view against Julian of Eclanum. Nisula, *Functions*, 60, n.1. [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. Nisula, *Functions*, 11. [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. Nisula, *Functions*, 12; cf. chapter 2, ‘The Language of Desire’, 15-58. Nisula concludes that Augustine ‘uses the three standard nouns for evil desire flexibly with no static, fixed and detailed differences in the meaning’. *Functions*, 58. [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
64. Nisula, *Functions*, 35. [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
65. Nisula, *Functions*, 28-35. [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
66. Nisula, *Functions*, 59-135. [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
67. Cf. *Confessions*, I.x(16); I.xix(30); II.vi(13); III.viii(16); X.xxx(41). [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
68. Nisula, *Functions*, 268-69. [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
69. Jesse Couenhoven, ‘Review: *Augustine and the Functions of Concupiscence*’, *Augustinian Studies* 45/1 (2014); 167-70, at 170. [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
70. NPNF, Series I, vol. 5, 257-308. [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
71. Nisula, *Functions*, 313. [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
72. Augustine, *Against Julian*, Fathers of the Church 35 (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1957). [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
73. Julian was engaging Augustine’s earlier book, *On Marriage*, 1.7. [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
74. Girolamo Zanchi, *De Religione Christiana Fides—Confession of Christian Religion*, ed. Luca Baschera and Christian Moser, Studies in the History of Christian Traditions (Leiden: Brill, 2007), VII.v, citing Augustine, *Against Julian*, V.3; translation modernised. [↑](#footnote-ref-74)
75. Cf. Dongsun Cho, ‘Divine Acceptance of Sinners: Augustine’s Doctrine of Justification’, *Perichoresis* 12, no. 2 (2014): 163–84. [↑](#footnote-ref-75)
76. Cf. Nisula, *Functions*, 333-34. [↑](#footnote-ref-76)
77. Stevens, *Fight of Your Life*, 10–11. See the helpful engagement of Stevens in Roberts, *Pride*, 70–79; David Gibson and Jonathan Gibson, ‘“Salvation Belongs to the Lord”: Mapping the Doctrine of the Total Depravity of Human Creatures’, in *Ruined Sinners to Reclaim: Sin and Depravity in Historical, Biblical, Theological, and Pastoral Perspective*, ed. David Gibson and Jonathan Gibson (Wheaton: Crossway, 2024), 4–9. [↑](#footnote-ref-77)
78. Stevens, *Fight of Your Life*, 33. [↑](#footnote-ref-78)
79. Stevens, *Fight of Your Life*, 20. [↑](#footnote-ref-79)
80. Stevens, *Fight of Your Life*, 26. [↑](#footnote-ref-80)
81. Stevens, *Fight of Your Life*, 29; italics mine. [↑](#footnote-ref-81)
82. Stevens, *Fight of Your Life*, 32. [↑](#footnote-ref-82)
83. Sam Allberry, *Is God Anti-Gay?*, Second edition (Purcellville, VA: The Good Book Company, 2023), 41. [↑](#footnote-ref-83)
84. Allberry, *Is God Anti-Gay?*, 59. [↑](#footnote-ref-84)
85. Allberry, *Is God Anti-Gay?*, 60.; italics in original. [↑](#footnote-ref-85)
86. Allberry, *Is God Anti-Gay?*, 61. [↑](#footnote-ref-86)
87. Andrew T. Walker, *God and the Transgender Debate: What Does the Bible Actually Say about Gender Identity* (Centralia, WA: Good Book Company, 2017)., subheading for pp. 67-68. [↑](#footnote-ref-87)
88. *Ibid.* [↑](#footnote-ref-88)
89. *Ibid.*, 68; italics mine. [↑](#footnote-ref-89)
90. J. Garrett Kell, ‘What Temptation Is and Is Not’, Crossway, accessed 9 April 2024, <https://www.crossway.org/articles/what-temptation-is-and-is-not/>. Accessed 9 April 2024. This blog post is taken from his volume in the 9 Marks ‘Church Questions’ series; J. Garrett Kell, *How Do I Fight Sin and Temptation?* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2024). [↑](#footnote-ref-90)
91. Moo, *James*, 72. [↑](#footnote-ref-91)
92. Moo, *James*, 75. [↑](#footnote-ref-92)
93. Robert A. J. Gagnon, *The Bible and Homosexual Practice: Texts and Hermeneutics* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2002), 462. [↑](#footnote-ref-93)
94. Gagnon, *Bible and Homosexual Practice*, 38. [↑](#footnote-ref-94)
95. Sydney Diocesan Doctrine Commission, ‘Doctrine of Concupiscence’, 6.4. [↑](#footnote-ref-95)