

“A Biblical View of Sexuality & Gender”

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January 11, 2022

I want to talk to you on the topic of a biblical view of sexuality and gender and let me just say at the outset parents if you have small children with you right now you need to determine if you want them to hear some explicit terms because there will be some terms used that uh would be explicit so parental discretion is advised this is rated PG okay so uh we need you just to be aware because we want to cover this topic.

The purpose of the message let me just be very clear is not to lament the condition of society. It's not to denigrate people. It's not to uh juxtaposition ourselves as against anybody who may not agree with a biblical view of sexuality and gender. Rather what my desire is to offer hope. It's to offer clarity in the midst of what is a very confusing season in our culture and in our country.

Specifically I want to offer hope and clarity to those who are in the transgender community. I want you to know you're welcome here, I want you to know that we love you. I also want offer some clarity to young people who are struggling with issues of gender identity. They're struggling with issues of their own sexuality and what role that plays in their life and how to process feelings that they're having.

I want to encourage parents and educators who are unsure of how to process this whole subject with children and if you're an educator as you work. Let me say at the outset I'm deeply indebted to Preston Sprinkle for his work in his book *Embodyed* and to Pastor James White. In fact we are offering today at all of the campuses you can get a copy of *Embodyed* which really is a look at the whole transgender subject. It gives you insight. It gives you stories and helps you to process. Maybe you know somebody who has gender dysphoria or you know somebody who's in the transgender community and you're not sure what the issues are for them how they view certain things you're not sure how to relate to them. This book could be very helpful for you.

Then we've got a book that we're offering called *The Talk* and it's seven lessons to introduce your child to biblical sexuality. Parents you need to do this. You need to be on the front end not the back end of that discussion. The time to start that discussion is not when they become a teenager. The time to start the discussion is when they're going to school. You need to start the discussion when your child's six or seven years old and begin building on it.

When it comes to gender in our present day culture we have moved from the presumption of two genders male and female to an acceptance or accommodation at last count to 72 gender combinations. It used to be that a person's sex and gender were considered to be synonymous but in the last 20 years that has radically changed.

As Medical News Today states ... “*Gender is different than sex. Although genetic factors typically define a person's sex, gender refers to how they identify inside. Only the person themselves can determine what their gender identity is.*”

Is that true? That's what our society says. That's why some of you when you go on LinkedIn and you're relating to business colleagues you will find increasingly not only the person's name but pronouns following the name that give you a sense of what gender they want to be addressed as are known by.

What does the Bible say about sexual and gender identity?

For starters, let's just answer the question what is it that makes a person inherently biologically male or female. I think we could say there are three criteria ...

First of all there's external sexual anatomy. Females have breasts and a vulva. Males have a penis and a scrotum.

There are second internal reproductive organs. Females have ovaries and a uterus. Males have testicles.

And then third the endocrine systems produce sex characteristics by way of hormones. So the females have higher levels of estrogen that contribute to breast development and other features. Males have higher levels of testosterone that produce facial hair and muscle mass.

While it's true that our interpretation of sexual characteristics may be culturally constructed or informed ... for example and I'm using this just as an example it is a typical old-school stereotype okay ... girls like dolls ... boys like trucks. So that's a culturally enforced expectation gender role identity. I'm not saying that's true today I'm saying that would be an example of a stereotypical culturally constructed identity.

Sex itself is not the result of social or cultural constructs. It is a matter of physical biology. Now as I said it used to be accepted that sex and gender were synonymous. If you had male anatomy your gender was male and if you had female anatomy your gender was female. But today in secular society the preferred view is that a person's gender identity is based on their own personal sense of self so that they may be male, female, both, or neither.

In fact as I said at last count there are 72 defined genders starting with agender, androgynous bigender, cisgender, and the list goes on. Which brings us to the whole subject of transgender is in many respects a catch-all for the various ways that people experience conflict between their biological sex and their gender identity or gender role.

The primary belief of the transgender community is that sex and gender are two totally different things. They would say a person's gender, rather than their biological sex, is the basis from which a person's identity is built. A person may be biologically female but if they feel they are male then they should act like a male and even change their biological anatomy to reflect their inner sense of self. And this is being promoted in the culture at a huge pace.

Children's programming is it's changing the face of what this next generation is going to look like in a massive way. At last count there are 70 children's programs featuring 259 characters that are not the typical gender but have a variety of gender identities. Shows that feature this include *Blue's Clues*, *My Little Pony*, *Disney Duck Tales*, *She-Ra*, *DC Super Hero Girls*, *Clifford The Big Red Dog*, and *Star Wars Resistance* to name a few. Toy makers are getting in on it Hasbro recently maybe you saw that converted *Mr. Potato Head* to just *Potato Head*. And so it goes on that in the media and in popular culture there is a promotion of what we might call a transgender agenda.

In many parts of the country educators are encouraged to take kids on a gender exploration journey without parental consent. And politically it's being facilitated with laws such as the one that was passed in Scotland that will allow four-year-old's to identify as the opposite sex and alter their names without parental consent. In Oregon fifteen-year-olds can medically transition without parental consent.

So the real question for us is what does the Bible say about sex, sexuality, and gender identity? In Genesis 1:26-27 (NLT), "*Then God said let us make human beings in our image to be like ourselves they will reign over the fish in the sea the birds in the sky the livestock all wild animals on earth and the small animals that scurry along the ground so God created human beings in His own image in the image of God He created them male and female He created them.*"

This passage tells us that God made two genders: male and female. It further tells us that human beings are made in the image of God. Which means there are aspects of God's image that are reflected in the female gender and there are aspects of God's image that are reflected in the male gender and together male and female reflect God.

Jesus affirmed this understanding in Matthew chapter 19:4 (NLT) when He said, *haven't you read the Scriptures they record that from the beginning God made them male and female.* All of which tells us that our sexuality and gender is not based on how we feel about it.

God has intentionally designed our body and our identity that we might demonstrate His will for our good and His glory. What the enemy wants to do is the enemy wants to confuse and destroy a human being's identity so they won't understand who they are. So they won't fulfill God's purpose and they won't know who God has created them to be.

In Genesis 1:28, "*God blessed them and said be fruitful and multiply fill the earth and govern it.*" What this is telling us is that in addition to creating human beings in His image as male and female He has a purpose in that and a part of that purpose (not the whole purpose but a part of it) is to fill the earth (that's reproduction) and to govern it (that's rulership).

In a day where children are viewed either as an inconvenience or viewed as an option ... that in God's design male and female were created for the sake of reproduction. Now one of the best things that you can give God is a baby and one of the best things you can give society is a child who is raised to know God. And if you aren't able to have children or you're not in a position where that is possible ... then there are all kinds of ways you can be involved. you can be the greatest aunt or uncle there ever was. (Other general ideas.)

When it comes to transgender identity and clothing, the Bible forbids men dressing like women. In Deuteronomy 22:5 (NLT), "*A woman must not put on men's clothing and a man must not wear women's clothing anyone who does this is detestable in the sight of the lord your God.*"

You might say that styles have changed and sometimes men's and women's clothing is very similar. But the principle itself is timeless. If you're cross-dressing to present yourself as the opposite sex it is detestable in God's eyes.

This is echoed in the New Testament lest somebody would say, *well that's Old Testament we're in a New Covenant*. In 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 (NLT), “*Don't you realize that those who do wrong will not inherit the kingdom of God? Don't fool yourselves. Those who indulge in sexual sin, or who worship idols, or commit adultery, or are male prostitutes, or practice homosexuality, or are thieves, or greedy people, or drunkards, or are abusive, or cheap people – none of these will inherit the kingdom of God.*”

The word there for male prostitutes is *malachos* in the Greek and it has to do with men dressing like women. That's what the word means. It's translated as male prostitute because the purpose of a man dressing like a woman in this list was for the purpose of prostitution. Same-sex activity goes against God's creative intent in making us distinctly male and female.

Furthermore it's really important to understand that our sexuality is deeply related to our identity. And when people abuse sex or turn from God's design of human sexuality what happens is it's not only a sinful act but it strikes a blow to their human identity. This is what Paul is saying 1 Corinthians 6:18-19 ... “*There is a sense in which sexual sins are different from all others. In sexual sin we violate the sacredness of our own bodies, these bodies that were made for God-given and God-modeled love for becoming one with one another. Or didn't you realize that your body is a sacred place, the place of the Holy Spirit? Don't you see that you can't live however you please, squandering what God paid such a high price for?*”

That we belong to God and the way we steward our bodies and the way we understand sexuality has everything to do with our identity as well as fulfilling His purpose for us.

Some will say well in the New Testament Paul says there's neither male nor female and they're quoting ... “*For you are all children of God through faith in Christ Jesus. And all who have been united with Christ in baptism have put on Christ, like putting on new clothes. There is no longer Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male and female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus.*” Galatians 3:26–28 (NLT)

This passage is not suggesting that biology and anatomy don't matter. It's not saying the Jewish race doesn't exist any longer. It's not saying in that day that there was no more slavery. What it's saying is that our differences in life as we come together in Christ we are one with Him and we are one with one another. It doesn't erase the differences it simply means that in relating to one another there are no differences ... that we are one.

What does science say on the transgender issue?

In a February 2020 Wall Street Journal op-ed piece entitled, *The Dangerous Denial Of Sex*, Penn State evolutionary biologist Colin Wright and University of Manchester developmental biologist Emma Hilton wrote, “*In human, as in most animals or plants and organisms biological sex corresponds to one of two distinct types of reproductive anatomy ... In humans, reproductive anatomy is unambiguously male or female at birth more than 99.98 percent of the time ... No third type of sex cell exists in humans and therefore there is no sex 'spectrum' or additional sexes beyond male and female. Sex is binary.*”

It is male and female. So what does the Bible say about sexual and gender identity?

If a person is struggling between their internal sense of self and their biological sex which determines who they are? The Bible says they're biological sex. Science says their biological sex.

What should a person do who is struggling with gender dysphoria?

What does a person do who struggles with feeling their internal self identifies more closely with the opposite sex? Well to answer that question I think there are several things to be considered.

First of all is their internal self-struggle because of societal stereotypes? In other words, they are female ... and again I'm using I'm not trying to be flippant with the statement ... I'm using what would be for years certain kinds of stereotypes ... they're female they like trucks instead of dolls ... they like short hair instead of long hair ... they like contact sports instead of gymnastics ... so you got this girl and she is inclined toward things that would stereotypically be more identified with boys.

I'm simply by using that illustration suggesting that there are many people and especially children who struggle based on their inability to identify with societal stereotypes.

So you have a you have a girl who wants to be an MMA fighter ... you have a boy who doesn't like contact sports and doesn't like the aggressiveness often associated with boys ... What you have in that is you have children trying to figure life out and figure identity out and that's a part of growing up. That does not mean they're experiencing gender dysphoria. It does not mean that they should investigate the other gender as if that might be somehow preferable for them.

In those cases it's very helpful for parents not to make a big deal about it. Simply relax and affirm them as a person. I don't think this is relegated only to small children. You could have adolescent boys who are called derogatory names used for people who identify themselves as gay. And instantly that creates in the pre-teen and teen years a struggle with their identity that has nothing to do with gender dysphoria and is not something that would necessitate exploration of the other gender and their potential identity with it. Are you with me on this?

What if the internal struggle is based on gender dysphoria? In other words what if the person truly does not identify with their biological sex? How many people are truly in that sense transgender?

According to studies it's 0.5% of the population. Now by giving that number I am not in any way suggesting it's not a big deal especially if you're the person dealing with that. If you fall in that percentage. In fact it's very real to you. If that is you or if that is someone you know, let me just say very clearly that no matter how you have to this point responded to that dysphoria ... either by dressing opposite to your sex or by transitioning through hormones or surgery ... I want you to clearly understand ... God loves you. As a church we love you. You're welcome here. You matter to God. You're important to God. You matter to us.

At the same time, I think it's very important for you to understand this ... because society is giving you a different message and it's not true ... you need to understand we can love and accept you as a person without affirming your decisions. We can also affirm your value as a person and still be committed to the teaching of Scripture.

The Bible does not condemn transgender people but it does prohibit transgender activity. And that could be said of any sinner and everybody's a sinner. So that could be said of everybody in this room. That the Bible does not condemn people but it does prohibit sinful activity ... whatever that activity is.

And everybody in this room is a sinner. Romans 3:10 says ... *"As the Scriptures say, ‘No one is righteous—not even one.’ Romans 3:10 (NLT)* The fact of the matter is that Jesus came to this world to heal our brokenness. He came to a broken humanity and all of us have been broken by sin in one way or another. Let me be very clear ... having gender dysphoria is not a moral issue. Gender dysphoria is a psychological condition that causes a person to think and feel like they are the opposite sex. But that does not mean you are a different sex.

Here's what all of us have to understand as moral agents in God's creation. Our decisions have moral ramifications. Jesus offers a wholeness that will bring unity between your biological sex and your sense of self. And that wholeness doesn't come by changing your physiology but by giving attention to what's going on in your mind and in your heart. And that is true with every single sin situation that we as human beings encounter. Jesus gives us the power to deal with our heart and our mind so that we might be whole. Transitioning will move you further away from who you are ... not closer to who you are.

Walt Heyer had struggled with gender confusion from an early age. He estimates from age four. At age 42 he underwent gender reassignment surgery. For eight years he lived as a trans female named Laura Jensen. During that time he was still unhappy and attempted suicide. He has since gone back to his original gender and has given himself to studying the subject of gender transition and these are the statistics he has compiled from research done by universities.

He's found that 20% of those who undergo gender reassignment surgery regret it. 41% attempt suicide. 50% have depressive symptoms. 90% have significant psychopathology. That means there's been abuse there have been traumas there have been factors that have led to psychological issues ... yet unresolved.

What if my child is struggling with gender?

This is a big question ... Do I let them choose their gender? Do I go along with their gender choice? Do I take them to a clinic and allow them to take puberty blockers? This issue for Generation Z (which would be the current young generation) and their parents is massive.

A recent Gallup poll found that 5.6 of US adults identify as LGBTQIA+ up from 4.5 in 2017. In that same poll 16% of Generation Z identify themselves as LGBTQIA+. In other words, Generation Z is increasingly becoming sexually amorphous. That means sexually without definition.

Miley Cyrus put it this way, *I don't relate to being boy or girl and I don't have to have my partner relate to boy or girl.* Furthermore, while gender dysphoria is a real condition that affects a small percentage of the population when it comes to Generation Z. Something else is happening.

A Brown University professor published a study that has since been suppressed by the LGBTQIA+ community. In his study he found this ... *Rapid onset gender dysphoria among teens and young adults may be a social contagion linked with having friends who identify as LGBTQIA+, identity politics peer culture, and an increase in internet use.*

Preston Sprinkle in his book, *Embodied*, tells a story of a girl named Stephanie. It will illustrate what we're talking about here. *Stephanie grew up as a stereotypically feminine girl on the autism spectrum. When she was 13 years old she told her mother that she was transgender. Stephanie's declaration seemed to come out of nowhere. There had been no prior history of gender dysphoria. No tomboyish interests or behavior. Her mother did, however, find out that Stephanie had just heard a presentation about being transgender at school. A school where over 5% of the student population identified as transgender or non-binary. Her mother Carol took Stephanie to a gender clinic to seek counsel. Here's what Carol said the clinician told her ... I must refer to my daughter with masculine pronouns ... call her by a masculine name ... buy her a binder to flatten her breasts ... he recommended no therapy and there was no consideration of the social factors that obviously affected her thinking. I was directed to put her on puberty blocking drugs. I was falsely assured that these drugs were well studied and that they were a perfectly safe way for her to explore gender. I was told that if I did not comply she would be at a higher risk of suicide.*

In another story Helena was 14 when she felt she might be attracted to both boys and girls and began to explore what this might mean for her through online community on Tumblr. It was there that she learned about various gender identities. She read story after story of people identifying as trans. Eventually she started relating to the stories and began identifying herself as trans. Helena learned on Tumblr that taking testosterone was the next step she had to take as a trans person. So she began cross hormone therapy or CHT. She found that getting the testosterone was easy. All it took was a one hour consultation with a counselor who asked about her dysphoria. Looking back on it Helena said, *I had all these rehearsed answers that I didn't genuinely believe but it's really popular for the trans community to help each other rehearse answers and tell each other what to say to doctors.*

Helena was on CHT for two years. It wasn't long before problems began popping up. Let me let her speak ... *It is a common thing for women on testosterone to experience a lot of anger. Then there's the weird phenomenon where you get upset and want to cry but you can't. Eventually these kinds of problems started getting more apparent and I started feeling miserable. I was angry like all the time. Everything made me angry. I felt like I'd been put through the wringer with all these emotional changes. It really messed with my mental health.*

Helena also learned that high doses of testosterone in females often cause their ovaries and uterus to atrophy after about five years. Helena was miserable ... emotionally, physically, mentally. At some point she remembers she just had to say that it was not working. Ultimately she decided to detransition back to female.

The media promotion of all things trans has created a significant jump in gender dysphoria especially among young females. *The Tavistock Centre in London. UK ... which is the main gender clinic in the UK ... treated 17 females for gender dysphoria in 2009. In 2019 they treated 1,740 females. That's a 5,000% increase in ten years.*

Research on rapid onset gender dysphoria among teens reveals the following ... 63% had one or more diagnosis of psychiatric disorder or neurodevelopment disorder including a traumatic event, cutting, ADHD, OCD, eating disorders, and bipolar. Many of those with rapid onset gender dysphoria had trans friends and reported feeling more popular once they came out. And 72%, when taken to a gender therapist or physician, were never encouraged to explore issues of mental health before proceeding to gender transition.

Colin Wright and Emma Hilton ... The large majority of gender dysphoric use eventually outgrow their feelings of dysphoria during puberty ... ‘Affirmation’ therapies, that insist the child’s cross-sex identity should never be questioned, and puberty blocking drugs, advertised as a way for children to “buy time” to sort out their identities, ... only solidify feelings of dysphoria, setting them on a pathway to more invasive medical interventions and permanent infertility. This pathologizing of sex atypical behavior is extremely worrying and regressive. – Wall Street Journey, “The Dangerous Denial of Sex” February 2020

Prescribing drugs or stopping puberty is not the way to help a twelve-year-old who is struggling with identity. The advice of transition or suicide is irresponsible ... psychologically, educationally, and ethically. *So what should parents do?*

Three Summary Statements ...

1. Be Informed

You need to know what your child is looking at online. As a parent you do not have an obligation to respect your child’s internet privacy. You need to look at their history. If they’re deleting their history you need to stop their internet use. There are programs that can block out certain sites. You need to know what they’re doing when they’re online. What they’re doing with social media. Who they’re following. Who they’re engaging with. Who they’re texting. Who they’re interacting with. Who their friends are. What their friends are like. You need to be informed of that. You need to wisely, carefully, but firmly guide your children in their selection of friends. That means there are some friends that your children should not be hanging out with.

2. Be Involved

You should be active in what’s happening in your child’s life. You should know where they’re at. You should know who they’re with. You should know what they’re thinking. How they’re processing life and that takes time. That takes investment. That means blocking out time. Here’s the formula ... *Love + Time = Relationship*.

3. Be In Charge

I’m not talking about you being a dictator. You are in charge ... when it comes to your child’s identity ... in your child’s identity decision ... you’re mature and they aren’t. And it’s absolutely ridiculous to think a child, as a preteen ... as a teen ... is capable of making a gender choice. That is that doesn’t make any sense. Most people are not fully developed psychologically until they’re about 25.

Students let me say this ... listen to your parents. You may feel they don't understand you but do your best to explain where you're at ... but then listen to their wisdom. God has given them to you as a protection for you to watch over you to guide you.

Moms and dads ... you should be the first person who talks to your child about sex and about gender. And those talks need to start as soon as they go to school. I'm not saying you give them everything you know when they're six but you start but you start talking to them so that you're creating the conversation so that when they have a question they already feel comfortable having the discussion with you. It's an ongoing discussion through their developmental years.

You're in charge ... not your child. What they need more than a friend they need a parent ... so you're in charge ... not the school ... not the school counselor ... not the gender clinic

If you're struggling with gender identity ... we love you we're praying for you we're here for you ... and our prayer for you along with everybody else ... is that all of us as people who've been broken by sin would increasingly grow in our experience of the wholeness that He alone can give by His power so that we can walk in the identity for which we were created we are created in Christ Jesus to do good works which He ordained in advance. Before we were born He had a plan for you .. and He created you and equipped you physically ... He equipped you to fulfill His will.

The answer to your identity isn't found in your feelings or your friends ... it's found in knowing Jesus!

Let's Pray!

For students ... kids ... parents ... teachers/educators/administrators ... families ... for those who are struggling in the area of gender dysphoria, gender identity, or gender roles and how it relates to how they've been created ... to come to a place of wholeness in You, Lord Jesus ... knowledge and understanding, power, hope, kindness, gentleness, revival ... help us to love people ... both those we agree with and with those we may completely disagree with ... whose decisions we cannot affirm ... to love them anyway ... grant us courage to not be afraid to graciously stand for truth ... help us not become goaded into silence for fear of being viewed as a bigot, or as being unsophisticated or uneducated. We know that a Biblical view is not a tenable view is not true. We can trust the Lord to lead us and if our heart is to be gracious and loving and kind ... You will give us the words. May we be like You, Jesus. In Your Name we pray, Amen.

<https://youtu.be/yvSuJpVHRh0>

Below are two great resources referenced in the message:

Embodied: Transgender Identities, the Church, and What the Bible Has to Say ...

<https://www.amazon.com/Embodied-Trans...>

The Talk: 7 Lessons to Introduce Your Child to Biblical Sexuality

<https://www.amazon.com/Talk-Lessons-I...>