

What Does the Bible Teach About Gender Identity Issues?

(Compiled by Paul R. Blake from multiple sources)

Introduction:

- A. A relatively new and quite controversial issue. Very little that is religiously useful has been written about this question, and what is in publication has been generated by liberal secular organizations and extremely progressive religious groups.
 - 1. I have seen very little substantive that is published by conservative religious groups or by brethren.
 - 2. Our approach will be factual and objective. We will represent the issue with fairness and respect for others, but at the same time unapologetically present what the word of God has to say.
 - 3. This class series is titled What Does the Bible Teach About; it is not What Do Current Philosophy and Politically Correctness Teach About or What Do Contemporary Progressive Religionists Teach About.
- B. What is the issue?
 - 1. "There are an estimated 700,000 people in the US who identify as "transgender": that is, they claim a gender identity different from "the sex they were assigned at birth." (U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Department of Justice, May 13, 2016)
 - 2. "Transgender - An umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or expression is different from cultural expectations based on the sex they were assigned at birth. Being transgender does not imply any specific sexual orientation. Therefore, transgender people may identify as straight, gay, lesbian, bisexual, etc." (Human Rights Campaign)
 - 3. Gender Dysphoria - "Significant distress caused when a person's assigned birth gender is not the same as the one with which they identify." (American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders)
 - 4. Gender Dysphoria in Children - "Gender dysphoria is much more common in children than in adults. However, the majority of children with gender dysphoria do not grow up to be adults with gender dysphoria. Studies that have followed children with a strong desire to be of the opposite sex have found that only a very small proportion of these children continue to have gender dysphoria when they grow up." (<http://www.cpa.ca/docs/File/Publications/FactSheet - 3/24/13>)
 - 5. The issue has currently received attention from the media and in politics out of proportion with its prevalence. As with the true statistics regarding the number of persons who are LGBTQ that have been inflated to around 10%, when according to a survey by the University in Berkley, CA, the actual percentage is less than 2%; so, this issue has been greatly exaggerated by the press and civil leaders far out of relation to the number of persons involved.
 - 6. Transgenderism in recent years has permeated the news in debates about bathroom bills, workplace policies, and school locker rooms. But

in all the flurry of the media, we can't forget that this is ultimately about real people, created in God's image.

7. While Christians may be repulsed by the behavior, they are not permitted to treat persons in sin with revulsion. Religious bigotry is not covered by the fig leaf apron of dogmatic rationalization. A professed Christian will be just as lost by treating a sinner with contempt as will the sinner will be lost over his sins.

C. This is not a complex issue.

1. The complexity with which it is presented in the public forum is generated by the media mongers. The Human Rights Campaign has developed a glossary of 32 terms to describe aspects of the issue, including nine forms of gender identity. (Glossary included at end)
2. It is also evident that these terms have been developed to euphemize or deliberately cloud the issue and reduce accuracy of communication.
3. However, the Bible is quite clear about this matter.

I. WHAT IS WRITTEN IN THE BIBLE?

A. God created men and women in His own Image - Gen. 1:27-28, 31

1. With sexually differentiated bodies, God chose to exhibit His Image in the souls and spirits men and women, and doing so in different, complementary ways.
2. Gen. 2:25 - There was no gender dysphoria and no discontentment with the way God had made them in spite of the fact that they were structurally and visibly different from each other.
3. Psalm 139:13-14 - Human sexuality, male or female, is a biological binary trait determined for each person by God Himself.
4. Matt. 22:30 - While this binary trait is essential here for reproduction and family structure, it will be irrelevant in the eternal realm.

B. The Bible differentiates the complementary nature of men and women (This is not a comprehensive list of the complementary natures of men and women)

1. Physically
 - a. We appear different physically - Song 7:1-7
 - b. We function differently - Lev. 15:16, 20:18
2. Familially - Gen. 3:16-19; Eph. 5:22-33, 6:4
3. Socially - Prov. 31:10-31
4. Emotionally
 - a. Mothers are better qualified as nurturers - Titus 2:3-5
 - b. Fathers more likely to place emphasis on discipline - Col. 3:21
5. In every case, our differences are designed to facilitate our roles and to complement each other - Gen. 2:18

C. Human beings intentionally choose to reject God's design.

1. "Gender is a kind of performance... something we actively create from the limited cultural materials we encounter; babies and toddlers are genderless." (Jessica Winter, "Are You a Boy or a Girl?" Slate, 5/11/16)

- a. This view makes gender subjective to each person, who must decide for themselves if they are a man or a woman, in spite of their design.
- 2. "Anatomy isn't destiny. Sexual orientation determines who you want to go to bed with, and gender identity determines who you want to go to bed as." (Allan Metcalf, "What's your PGP?" Chronicle of Higher Education, 9/2/14)
- D. However, three salient facts remain:
 - 1. Human beings often depart from God's way - Rom. 1:18-28
 - 2. These departures do not change God's way - Gal. 1:6-7
 - 3. These departures bring judgment on those who depart - Rom. 2:2, 5-11

II. ANSWERING OBJECTIONS

- A. "What about persons born with both genders?"
 - 1. "One in 1500 children may be born with some rare disorder of sex development or intersexual trait." (<https://www.apa.org/topics/lgbt/intersex.pdf>)
 - 2. In Genesis 3, because of Adam and Eve's sin, God curses the ground and death enters the world. Therefore the fall (mankind's rebellion against God) affects physical and spiritual ailments that afflict humanity.
 - a. There was no sickness or death before the curse.
 - 3. However, transgenderism is not about persons with ambiguous physical gender traits; it is about choices people make about sexuality in spite of unambiguous physical gender traits.
 - a. The first is a physical disorder; the second is an immoral choice.
 - 4. Persons born with intersexual traits can be aided medically and psychologically to differentiate, and their families and religious leaders can support and encourage them through this process.
- B. "What about persons who firmly believe they were born in the wrong gender?"
 - 1. What we believe and what we feel are often different than what is right.
 - 2. Romans 1:18-28 & 8:20-23 teach us that nature as we see and feel it is not necessarily nature as God intends it. Therefore, just because something seems "natural" to us in a fallen world doesn't mean it's right or wholesome.
 - a. Our feelings and personal beliefs can be distorted - Jer. 17:9
 - b. Our hearts aren't infallible. We must listen to God to find out who He has created us to be - Prov. 14:12
 - 3. I do not pretend to know the thoughts and feelings of one experiencing gender confusion. And since we all have distorted views of ourselves to a certain extent, this means that we should be able to respond with patience and gentleness to those experiencing temptation about their gender. We also know that by God's grace and power, people really can change. Through a greater knowledge of God and His Word, we all can grow in having a more accurate understanding of ourselves.
 - a. 1Cor. 6:11
 - 4. At the same time and for the safety of those in confusion, we must be clear that rejecting one's God-given gender is sin, and sin always has

certain consequences. Like all sin, it will lead to pain, despair, and ultimately perdition.

5. Well-meaning Christian parents may fall into the trap of thinking that it is love to acquiesce to their child's gender struggle without considering the more important responsibility of shepherding their eternal souls. But putting your acceptance of your children's preferences and behavior above their relationship with God doesn't truly help them.
6. This actually sets them up for an ongoing state of gender confusion and future hardship in relationships.
 - a. Edmund Burke wrote, "Whatever disunites man from God, also disunites man from man."

III HOW DO WE LOVE OUR NEIGHBORS WITH GENDER CONFUSION?

- A. Seek the wisdom of God - Matt. 10:16
- B. Seek to be compassionate - John 3:16; Rom. 5:8
- C. Speak the truth in love - Rom. 12:18; Eph. 4:15
- D. Speak to the erring of repentance - James 5:20
- E. Live contentedly as a man or woman of God - Deut. 6:6-8; Phil. 4:11

IV. HOW SHOULD WE RESPOND TO PERSONS WITH GENDER CONFUSION?

- A. As individual Christians
 1. Do not become upset or show disgust
 2. Thank them for being open and trusting toward you
 3. Assure them you aren't afraid of them and that you are interested in their well being
 4. Listen to them patiently
 5. Pray with and for them
 6. Let them know that God loves them
 7. Be realistic both with what the word of God has to say, and that yielding to the will of Christ does not mean the temptation or confusion will go away immediately
 8. Be available and proactive in leading them to repentance and salvation
- B. As a local church
 1. Preach all of God's Word as the standard and not avoid the challenging passages or questions
 2. Guard the truth of God's word, protect God's people from doctrinal error, and confront the world when it tries to press us into its mold.
 3. Speak the truth about all sins and emphasize God's forgiveness to all who come in sincere repentance of any sins.
 4. Summon all sinners to faith in Christ by sharing the Gospel with them.
 5. Provide opportunities where people can talk openly about any of their struggle and battles.
 6. Ask forgiveness when we are rude, thoughtless, bigoted, or joke about those who experience temptation toward homosexuality.

7. Strive to be a family that welcomes all who hate their sin and struggles against it, even when that struggle sometimes involves failure and setbacks. Be a place of both encouragement and accountability.

V. SCRIPTURES FOR FURTHER STUDY

- A. Humanity's creation in the image of God includes the ability to choose between right and wrong. Individuals were made morally responsible for their choices - Gen. 6:5; 8:21; Deut. 30:19; Josh. 24:15; 1 Kings 20:40; Psalm 51:5; Isa. 64:6; Jer. 17:9; Mark 7:21-23; Luke 16:15; John 7:17; Rom. 3:10-12; 5:12-21; 1 Cor. 15:22; Eph. 2:1-3; 1Tim. 2:5; Titus 3:5; Heb. 11:6; Rev. 22:17
- B. God's plan for human sexuality is that it is to be expressed only in a monogamous lifelong relationship between one man and one woman within the framework of marriage. This is the only relationship that is Divinely designed for the birth and rearing of children and is a union made in the sight of God, taking priority over every other human relationship - Gen. 1:27-28; 2:18, 20, 23-24; Isa. 54:4-8; 62:5b; Jer. 3:14; Ezek. 16; Hosea 2; Mal. 2:14; Matt. 19:4-6; Mark 10:9; John 2:1-2, 11; 1 Cor. 9:5; Eph. 5:23-32; 1Tim. 5:14; Heb. 13:4; Rev. 19:7-8
- C. God's word is very clear on the matter of homosexuality. It is specifically forbidden in both the Old and New Testament and thus a sin. It is unnatural in the sense of Creation's fixed order (not what we subjectively feel is natural). It is contrary to God's perfect design - Lev. 18:22; 20:13; Gen. 19; 1Cor. 6:9-11; 1Tim. 1:9-10
 1. Jesus did speak directly about homosexuality and affirmed the Creation account of marriage - Mark 7:20-23; Matt. 19:4-6, 11-12
 2. It is not an inescapable sin, nor is any other - 1Cor. 6:11

VI. GLOSSARY OF GENDER ISSUE TERMS

(Source: Human Rights Campaign -- These definitions are offered by the Human Rights Campaign, and are therefore subject to their point of view and agenda, and do not necessarily reflect Biblical truths or social norms.)

- A. Ally - A person who is not LGBTQ but shows support for LGBTQ people and promotes equality in a variety of ways.
- B. Androgynous - Identifying and/or presenting as neither distinguishably masculine nor feminine.
- C. Asexual - The lack of a sexual attraction or desire for other people.
- D. Biphobia - Prejudice, fear or hatred directed toward bisexual people.
- E. Bisexual - A person emotionally, romantically or sexually attracted to more than one sex, gender or gender identity though not necessarily simultaneously, in the same way or to the same degree.
- F. Cisgender - A term used to describe a person whose gender identity aligns with those typically associated with the sex assigned to them at birth.
- G. Closeted - Describes an LGBTQ person who has not disclosed their sexual orientation or gender identity.

- H. Coming out - The process in which a person first acknowledges, accepts and appreciates their sexual orientation or gender identity and begins to share that with others.
- I. Gay - A person who is emotionally, romantically or sexually attracted to members of the same gender.
- J. Gender dysphoria - Clinically significant distress caused when a person's assigned birth gender is not the same as the one with which they identify. According to the American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM), the term—which replaces Gender Identity Disorder—"is intended to better characterize the experiences of affected children, adolescents, and adults."
- K. Gender-expansive - Conveys a wider, more flexible range of gender identity and/or expression than typically associated with the binary gender system.
- L. Gender expression - External appearance of one's gender identity, usually expressed through behavior, clothing, haircut or voice, and which may or may not conform to socially defined behaviors and characteristics typically associated with being either masculine or feminine.
- M. Gender-fluid - According to the Oxford English Dictionary, a person who does not identify with a single fixed gender; of or relating to a person having or expressing a fluid or unfixed gender identity.
- N. Gender identity - One's innermost concept of self as male, female, a blend of both or neither—how individuals perceive themselves and what they call themselves. One's gender identity can be the same or different from their sex assigned at birth.
- O. Gender non-conforming - A broad term referring to people who do not behave in a way that conforms to the traditional expectations of their gender, or whose gender expression does not fit neatly into a category.
- P. Genderqueer - Genderqueer people typically reject notions of static categories of gender and embrace a fluidity of gender identity and often, though not always, sexual orientation. People who identify as "genderqueer" may see themselves as being both male and female, neither male nor female, or as falling completely outside these categories.
- Q. Gender transition - The process by which some people strive to more closely align their internal knowledge of gender with its outward appearance. Some people socially transition, whereby they might begin dressing, using names and pronouns, and/or be socially recognized as another gender. Others undergo physical transitions in which they modify their bodies through medical interventions.
- R. Homophobia - The fear and hatred of or discomfort with people who are attracted to members of the same sex.
- S. Intersex - An umbrella term used to describe a wide range of natural bodily variations. In some cases, these traits are visible at birth, and in others, they are not apparent until puberty. Some chromosomal variations of this type may not be physically apparent at all.
- T. Lesbian - A woman who is emotionally, romantically or sexually attracted to other women.

- U. LGBTQ - An acronym for "lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer."
- V. Living openly - A state in which LGBTQ people are comfortably out about their sexual orientation or gender identity, where and when it feels appropriate to them.
- W. Non-binary - An adjective describing a person who does not identify exclusively as a man or a woman. Non-binary people may identify as being both a man and a woman, somewhere in between, or as falling completely outside these categories. While many also identify as transgender, not all non-binary people do.
- X. Outing - Exposing someone's lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender identity to others without their permission. Outing someone can have serious repercussions on employment, economic stability, personal safety, or religious or family situations.
- Y. Pansexual - Describes someone who has the potential for emotional, romantic or sexual attraction to people of any gender though not necessarily simultaneously, in the same way or to the same degree.
- Z. Queer - A term people often use to express fluid identities and orientations. Often used interchangeably with "LGBTQ."
- AA. Questioning - A term used to describe people who are in the process of exploring their sexual orientation or gender identity.
- BB. Same-gender loving - A term some prefer to use instead of lesbian, gay or bisexual to express attraction to and love of people of the same gender.
- CC. Sex assigned at birth - The sex (male or female) given to a child at birth, most often based on the child's external anatomy. This is also referred to as "assigned sex at birth."
- DD. Sexual orientation - An inherent or immutable enduring emotional, romantic or sexual attraction to other people.
- EE. Transgender - An umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or expression is different from cultural expectations based on the sex they were assigned at birth. Being transgender does not imply any specific sexual orientation. Therefore, transgender people may identify as straight, gay, lesbian, bisexual, etc.
- FF. Transphobia - The fear and hatred of, or discomfort with, transgender people.