



2025 FALL CONFERENCE

BIBLICAL SEXUALITY IN TODAY'S CULTURE

with

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**SESSION
NOTES**

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LECTURE ONE

The Way Things Really Are

*All Scriptural Citations Are from the New American Standard Bible:
1995 Update, The Lockman Foundation, 1995.*

Prefatory Remarks

- We are discussing difficult things, I hope with good taste
- We surely have people here who wrestle with these things
- Probably some will object to what I have to say
- I acknowledge your value as a person made in God's image
- You are loved and not hated in this place
- The crucial issue is whether you trust Christ as savior
- If you want help, you can get help; many here can offer it

Embodiment and Image (Genesis 1:26-27)

- ²⁶ *And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.* ²⁷ *So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.*

Embodiment and Image

- God created humans in His image
- Embodiment is part of that image
- Sex (male and female) is an aspect of embodiment
- Both sexes are made to image God
- They depend on each other to do that

The Purpose of Sex

- The function of bodily parts implies their purpose
- Eyes are for... Seeing!
- Ears are for ... Hearing!
- Hands are for ... Grasping!
- The pleasure from using these parts is distinct from their purpose
- Used rightly, they produce pleasure, but pleasure is not why we have them

Purpose Versus Uses

- A purpose is the end or goal for which a thing exists
- We may use things in ways beside their purpose
- We can also use things in ways that contradict their purpose

Think of a Car

- Purpose: transportation
- Uses: status symbol, listening environment, place of solitude, comfortable for napping, pleasure of driving
- Other uses: roadblock, intimidation, weapon
- A car on blocks can perform certain “uses,” but it doesn’t function as a car
- Someone who employs a car for “other uses” defeats its purpose as a car to some degree

The Purpose of Sex

- The function of bodily parts implies their purpose
- Therefore, the purpose of sex is procreation
- Procreation is necessary for the survival of humanity
- Other necessary activities (eating, drinking, sleeping) are solitary
- Procreation is always social; no one can procreate in isolation
- Procreation always requires a partner of the opposite sex

The Definition of the Sexes

- The purpose of sex as procreation implies a definition of the sexes
- By definition, a male when healthy produces the smaller gamete; he is able to beget children
- By definition, a female when healthy produces the larger gamete; she is able to conceive children

Genesis 1:28

- *And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.*
- Procreation is at the heart of God's creative purpose
- Procreation requires male and female
- Procreation is essential to dominion

The Protection of Procreation

- *²¹ And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; ²² And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. ²³ And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. ²⁴ Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.*

Procreation's Importance

- Procreation (begetting, conceiving, and birthing children) and the flourishing of those children is essential to the survival of humanity
- By all metrics, children flourish best when reared by a committed mother and father
- Source: Brad Wilcox, et al, "Do Two Parents Matter More than Ever?" Institute for Family Studies, 2023
- Source: Brad Wilcox, et al, "Less Poverty, Less Prison, More College: What Two Parents Mean For Black and White Children," Institute for Family Studies, 2021

The Protection of Procreation

- Procreation (begetting, conceiving, and birthing children) and the flourishing of those children is essential to the survival of humanity
- By all metrics, children flourish best when reared by a committed mother and father
- Marriage is the social arrangement that encourages the commitment of mothers and fathers to each other and to their children
- Marriage is necessarily exclusive; any other arrangement undermines the necessary commitment

So, What Is Marriage?

- *Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh (Gen 2:24)*
- Cited by Jesus (Matt 19:5; Mark 10:7)
- Also cited by Paul (1 Cor 6:16; Eph 5:31)
- There is a *leaving*: a demoting of prior commitments
- There is a *cleaving*: a primary commitment to the spouse
- There is a *becoming* one flesh: a sexual union

By This Definition

- Some marriages are always sinful (polygamy, most divorces and remarriages)
- Some marriages are subsequently forbidden by divine decree (consanguinity or incestuous marriages)
- But two people of the same sex can never be married to each other; such “marriages” are fictions, even when state sanctioned
- Question: What about marriages with an infertile partner?

So, What Has Changed?

- Our culture downplays the importance of procreation as central for marriage
- Our culture de-emphasizes the role of commitment as definitive for marriage
- Our culture substitutes romantic expression as a basis for marriage
Marriage becomes a form of self expression
- Result: the view that all who love should be allowed to marry; all who stop loving should be allowed to unmarry

Fictitious Marriages?

- Remember that we agreed to allow the state to define fictitious unmarriages for decades before the state began to define fictitious marriages
- Recall that Ronald Reagan, as Governor of California, signed the first no-fault divorce law in the country

What Can Christians Do?

- Celebrate commitment rather than romance
- Work to strengthen right relationships between husbands and wives
- Remember that children are an heritage from the Lord (Psalm 127:3)—this includes big families
- Work to support young couples who are rearing children
- Articulate and model a robust, biblical vision of masculinity and femininity

LECTURE TWO

Idolatry and Identity

Notice the Shift in Terms

- *Sodomy* was understood as an activity
- *Homosexuality* was understood as a pathology
- *Gay* is understood as an identity
- None of these is quite correct
- Same sex conduct begins as an appetite from disordered affections
- Disordered affections give rise to sinful activity
- When any affection or activity is indulged repeatedly, it can begin to feel like an identity

A Word About Identity

- We never find our identity in ourselves, but only in our relationship to things outside ourselves
- These may include parents, spouses, children, vocations, avocations, possessions, etc
- We are made to find our ultimate identity before God
- We are made to find secondary identities in the complex of duties and relationships in which God has placed us and that He wants us to use to serve Him
- Ultimately, whatever we love becomes our identity

Mark 12

- ²⁸ And one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, and perceiving that he had answered them well, asked him, Which is the first commandment of all? ²⁹ And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: ³⁰ And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. ³¹ And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these. ³² And the scribe said unto him, Well, Master, thou hast said the truth: for there is one God; and there is none other but he: ³³ And to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbour as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices. ³⁴ And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God. And no man after that durst ask him any question.

True Monotheism

- There is one and only one true and living God
 - There is only one being worthy of our worship
 - To worship is to value as an end rather than as a means
 - Anything that we value as an end becomes a god to us
 - Whatever we value as an end is what we serve
 - That thing becomes a center of value, an identity
 - We come to rely on (trust) it and give it our loyalty
- “Loyal trust” is a good definition of love

Monotheism and Love

- There is one and only one true and living God
- There is only one who merits final loyalty and trust
- We must love God with all our heart, soul, mind, strength
- Only God can be loved for Himself

- All other loves are for God's sake: neighbor, brethren, spouse, children—whatever
- When we detach those loves from God, they become idols and, inevitably, identities

Problem with Idolatries

- No idol is capable of bearing the weight of the human soul
- Every idol will let you down
- All gods are jealous gods
- Every false god wants to dominate your life, take you over
- Every false god tries to destroy your other gods
- Result: every polytheist becomes conflicted and frustrated
- Every idol pushes you to greater and greater extremes
- If you choose only one idol, it will still fail you

Said a Different Way

- When we neglect God, we turn our secondary identities into primary identities
 - These identities usurp God's place and become idols
 - We begin to love them for what they are rather than for how they glorify God
 - We substitute them for God as ultimate loves
- Our identity becomes grounded in unstable, finite things

Identities Examples

- I am who I'm with
- I am what I do
- I am what I own
- I am what I accomplish
- I am my protest
- I am who I cheer
- I am addicted to

Idolatrous Identities

- Always begin with some good thing; they always start with virtues
- Remove that good thing from its rightful place as a means to glorify God
- Overvalue that thing (sentimentalism)
- Twist that thing and take it to extremes
- Ultimately use that thing to inflict harm on other goods (brutality)

What Does That Mean?

- All idols begin as something good—the devil invents nothing new, he only twists what is good
 - Idolatrous people put this good thing in the place of God
 - All gods are jealous gods: they seek to destroy other gods
 - Any good thing that we put in place of God will attack other good things
 - They will lead us to overvalue or undervalue other goods
- Here are some examples:

Here Is What Idolatry Does

Sentimentality and Brutality

So, what About...

Pride

- Pride is the attitude that all people take toward idolatrous identities
- They will assert their idolatrous identities whenever they can
- They will defend their idolatrous identities at all costs
- If unable to express an idolatrous identity, they will conceal it rather than abandon it
- Nevertheless, all people have a built-in imperative to confess our idols/identities, and they will come out

Same Sex Attraction and Activity

- Begins as a wrong way of feeling
- Progresses to a wrong way of doing
- Becomes an idolatrous way of identifying
- BUT it is only one of many idolatries
- You do not need to experience SSA to understand people who do experience it
- We are all of us idolaters at some level, and we know by experience how idolatry works

As a Recovering Idolater

- You should feel compassion for other idolaters because you know the pain that your idolatry has brought you
- You have a right to speak to other idolaters about the effects of their idolatry
- You have a right to offer counsel to other idolaters about how to reject their idolatry
- You must never recognize any form of idolatry as normal or acceptable

LECTURE THREE

Same Sex Attraction and Activity

What I Hope To Do

- Provide an overall biblical context for the debate
- Overview the so-called “clobber passages”
- Review pro-LGBTQIA+ responses and arguments
- Examine pro-LGBTQIA+ “script”
- Respond to so-called “Conversion Therapy”
- Provide alternative biblical “script” for those who face SSA

The Overall Biblical Context: We Must

- Affirm the creation and purpose of sex and marriage
- Examine direct references to conduct
- Also examine indirect references to principles
- Heed the teachings of Jesus on sex and marriage
- Accept the teaching of the apostles on sex and marriage
- IOW, it’s not just about “clobber passages,” but about a full-orbed biblical vision of human sexuality
- Still, we can’t ignore the “clobber passages”

“Open and Affirming” Tactics

- Make SSA individuals seem normal and appealing
- Solicit sympathy for the pain that these individuals endure
- Provide alternative interpretations of biblical texts
- Emphasize the lack of moral foundation for traditionalism
- Redefine the problem in terms of identity and oppression
- Depict traditionalists as oppressors of LGBTQIA+ and activists as heroes

What About Those Passages?

- Genesis 19; Jude 6–7
- Leviticus 18:22
- Leviticus 20:13
- Romans 1:26–27
- 1 Corinthians 6:9–11
- 1 Timothy 1:8–11

Passage 1: Gen 19 and the Sin of Sodom

- ⁵ *and they called to Lot and said to him, “Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us that we may have relations with them.”*⁶ *But Lot went out to them at the doorway, and shut the door behind him,* ⁷ *and said, “Please, my brothers, do not act wickedly.”* ⁸ *Now behold, I have two daughters who have not had relations with man; please let me bring them out to you, and do to them whatever you like; only do nothing to these men, inasmuch as they have come under the shelter of my roof.”* ⁹ *But they said, “Stand aside.” Furthermore, they said, “This one came in as an alien, and already he is acting like a judge; now we will treat you worse than them.” So they pressed hard against Lot and came near to break the door.* ¹⁰ *But the men reached out their hands and brought Lot into the house with them, and shut the door.* ¹¹ *They struck the men who were at the doorway of the house with blindness, both small and great, so that they wearied themselves trying to find the doorway.*

Objections

- Sodom's sin was not sexual, but a lack of social justice
- "Behold, this was the guilt of your sister Sodom: she and her daughters had arrogance, abundant food and careless ease, but she did not help the poor and needy." Ezek 16:49
- Even if Sodom's sin was sexual, it involved forcible rape
- Therefore, this passage says nothing about loving, consensual same-sex relationships

But Ezek 16:49 Contextually

⁴⁷ Yet you have not merely walked in their ways or done according to their abominations; but, as if that were too little, you acted more corruptly in all your conduct than they. ⁴⁸ As I live," declares the Lord GOD, "Sodom, your sister and her daughters have not done as you and your daughters have done. ⁴⁹ Behold, this was the guilt of your sister Sodom: she and her daughters had arrogance, abundant food and careless ease, but she did not help the poor and needy. ⁵⁰ Thus they were haughty and committed abominations [literally: an abomination] before Me. Therefore I removed them when I saw it.

Abomination?

- An abomination (תועבה) is something that is disgusting, detestable, or repugnant
- The word is used particularly of things that God detests; these things are more than mere sins
- In the Holiness Code of Leviticus, the word is used collectively for multiple acts that God detests
- The only time it is applied to a single act is in the case of same-sex union

Sin of Sodom

- Abomination designates same-sex unions
- Intertestamental Jewish sources understood Sodom's sin to be sexual perversion
- Jude 7 designates Sodom's sin as sexual immorality and "going after strange flesh," a metaphor for unnatural desire
"Just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them, since they in the same way as these indulged in gross immorality and went after strange flesh, are exhibited as an example in undergoing the punishment of eternal fire."

Conclusion

- Sodom did commit the sin of pride
- Sodom was inhospitable
- Sodom did treat the poor and others unjustly
- Besides all these, Sodom also engaged in same-sex activity.
- The sin here is not simply the *how* (rape), though that is sinful - enough, but God never destroyed a city for rape
- The sin is also the *what*: same-sex pursuit and activity

Passages 2,3: Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13

- *You shall not lie with a male as one lies with a female; it is an abomination. (Lev 18:22)*
- *If there is a man who lies with a male as those who lie with a woman, both of them have committed a detestable act; they shall surely be put to death. Their bloodguiltiness is upon them. (Lev 20:13)*

Objections

- The contemporary situation assumed a power imbalance (e.g., pederasty) and only forbids predatory activity
- The passage only forbids unnatural same-sex activity; it does not address loving, committed relationships among those who are “naturally” SSA
- In any event, we don't observe many commandments from the Torah, so why observe this one?

Response

- None of the sexual laws in Lev 18 are qualified in any way (e.g., bestiality)
- Where explanation or qualification is necessary, the text parses and defines (e.g., incestuous relationships)
- The phrase “as with a woman” implies that all same-sex activity violates gender complementarity
- Both parties to the act are condemned
- All the listed sexual sins are abominations, but only same-sex activity is singled out as a named abomination

On Keeping the Law

- Law-keeping is not a mechanism for either salvation or sanctification (see e.g. 2 Cor 3)
- Specific laws are grounded in God's plan, were intended only for Israel, and do not apply to the church
- Many of the laws are grounded in God's character and apply to all people at all times in all places
- We decide which is which by observing how the NT treats the commandments
- The laws against same-sex conduct are repeated and amplified in the NT

Passage 4: Romans 1:26–27

- ²⁶ For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural, ²⁷ and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error.

Objections

- The problem is not SS activity, but excessive lust
- Or the problem is exploitive activity (eg, pederasty)
- SS activity is natural for some; it is only unnatural for those whose desires don't align with it
- In 1 Cor 11, Paul speaks of hair length as natural or unnatural, so clearly the concept is culturally relative

Passage 5: 1 Corinthians 6:9–11

- ⁹ Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, ¹⁰ nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God. ¹¹ Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.

Passage 6: 1 Timothy 1:10

- ⁸ But we know that the Law is good, if one uses it lawfully, ⁹ realizing the fact that law is not made for a righteous person, but for those who are lawless and rebellious, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers ¹⁰ and immoral men and homosexuals and kidnappers and liars and perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound

teaching, ¹¹ according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, with which I have been entrusted

Notes On These Verses

- “Malakoi” (effeminate men) appears to refer to men who allow themselves to be used sexually
- “Arsenokoitai” involves two elements. “Arsen” means a male. “Koite” means a bed. Arsenokoitai are “bedders of males,” ie, males who take other males to bed for sexual purposes

Objections

- - Only exploitive relationships such as pederasty or prostitution are being condemned
- These prohibitions do not forbid loving, committed same-sex relationships

Response

- Paul had perfectly good words for pederasty and prostitution if that is what he meant
- The Bible does not distinguish exploitive from non-exploitive forms of other sexual sins (adultery, incest, bestiality)
- Paul is coining the word *arsenokoitai* directly from the Greek of the LXX in Lev 18, 20; he is tethering these texts together to his warning
- In these texts, SS activity is considered lawless and rebellious, and it bars one from the kingdom of God

Summary

- The Bible is unequivocal in its rebuke of SS activity
- Both male and female forms are wrong
- Both partners are wrong
- “Malakos” further rebukes effeminacy in males
- The rebukes are not restricted to exploitive relationships with power imbalances
- No exceptions are made for “loving, committed” relationships

Sources to Read

- DeYoung, Kevin. *What Does the Bible Really Teach about Homosexuality?* Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015. 162pp.
- Gagnon, Robert. *The Bible and Homosexual Practice: Texts and Hermeneutics.* Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2002. 522 pp.
- Mohler, R. Albert (ed.). *God and the Gay Christian? A Response to Matthew Vines.* Louisville, KY: SBTs Press, 2014. 62pp.

How to Help People with SSA?

- Some Christians want only to condemn
- This approach is not biblical
- There are three available “scripts” for SSA
- One is the secular script
- One is Conversion or Reparative Therapy
- One is biblical and gospel-centered

Secular Script (Per Yarhouse)

- Same-sex attractions signal a naturally occurring or “intended by God” distinction between homosexuality, heterosexuality, and bisexuality
- Same-sex attractions are the way you know who you “really are” (emphasis on discovery).
- Same-sex attractions are the core of who you are
- Same-sex behavior is an extension of that core
- Self-actualization (behavior that matches who you “really are”) of your sexual identity is crucial for your fulfillment

Response

- We will deal with identity in the next lecture
- Sexual activity is not who you are
- You never need to engage in sexual activity to actualize your identity
- These principles are true whether you are SSA or OSA

What About Reparative or Conversion Therapy?

- *“Reparative therapy is a phrase referring to counseling, psychotherapy, or other forms of psychological treatment for homosexuals who are in conflict over their sexuality... It derives from a theory... that homosexuality represents unmet emotional needs or conflicts that need repairing, in which cases therapy should attempt to repair the damage or deficits the person experiences.”*

Dallas, Joe, and Nancy Heche. *The Complete Christian Guide to Understanding Homosexuality: A Biblical and Compassionate Response to Same Sex Attraction*. Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 2010, 104.

Problems with Reparative Therapy

- It is not grounded in the gospel
- It sees SSA as mainly a psychological problem
- It sets the wrong goal, effectively trying to trade same-sex lust for other-sex lust
- See Heath Lambert, "Oil and Water: The Impossible Relationship Between Evangelicalism and Reparative Therapy," ACBC Essays 1 (2017): 5-15

What Is the Biblical Script?

- Whether male or female, you are the image of God
- Sex is an aspect of God's good creation and must be used according to its design
- Because we are fallen, we experience disordered or inordinate affections about all kinds of things: money, food, prestige, security ... and sex
- Our disordered affections take us in different directions (e.g., gluttony vs anorexia), but they come from the same place
- Our disordered affections do not define us; they are not our identity
- To the degree that we treat them as our identity, they become idols that will frustrate us
- The solution to all disordered affections lies in the sufficiency of Christ: regeneration, followed by increasing sanctification, promises hope of change
- The goal is not to convert homosexuals into heterosexuals, but to see the likeness of Christ develop in all believers (1 Cor 6:9-11)
- Churches are assemblies of forgiven sinners of all sorts; we must practice mutual encouragement, warning, discipline, and restoration
- We must kill our willingness to respond to sin (Rom 8:13; Col 3:5-7); SSA is tough for those who experience it, but all temptation is tough
-

*We are no less ourselves, and we need be no less fulfilled,
if we refuse to indulge any disordered affection*

LECTURE FOUR

Sex and Gender

Thesis:

- Sex and gender are distinguishable
- For humans, sex and gender are not separable

Sex Is Built into Being

- Sex is created; it is a matter of biology, of male and female (Gen 1:26-28)
- Males are so arranged that when their bodies are functioning correctly, they produce the smaller gamete
- Females are so arranged that when their bodies are functioning correctly, they produce the larger gamete
- In other words, males beget and females conceive
- There is no third sex, and sexes cannot be exchanged

How About Sex Change?

- We have the technology to alter the way bodies look
- This technology can be used for many purposes, but it does not alter the individual's fundamental self
- These technologies may rightly be used to correct abnormalities

- Procedures (surgical or chemical) that do not correct abnormalities are simply mutilations
- In no case can these procedures change someone's sex

Gender Is a Matter of Behavior

- Partly, gender arises naturally from sex
- Males on average are larger and more powerful than females
- Males and females perform distinct functions as begetters and conceivers
- These differences in body and function imply distinctions in behavior for males and females
- These behaviors are rightly designated as masculine and feminine
- Gender is partly natural and partly conventional
- Cultures define certain behaviors as typically masculine or feminine
- They may also define some behaviors as stereotypically masculine or feminine (e.g., pink vs blue)
- These behaviors may vary from culture to culture
- It is possible for a culture to confuse or even negate naturally masculine and feminine behaviors
- The rejection of divinely-ordained sex and gender roles leads to false visions of masculinity and femininity

Gender is partly natural and partly conventional

- Certain beings are sexless, such as angels and especially God
- These beings are neither male nor female: the categories don't apply to them because they don't have a sex
- God is not a male or a female, and neither are the angels
- Nevertheless, God reveals Himself as masculine (though He possesses some feminine traits, as all males do)
- The holy angels are also presented as masculine

Sex Can Be Distinguished from Gender

- Procreation leads to different behaviors
- The duty to nurture leads to different behaviors
- Physical stature leads to different behaviors
- Cultural values lead to different behaviors
- Gendered behaviors constitute a statement about what sex one is, and what one thinks the nature of one's sex is
- According to the Ninth Commandment, these statements should correspond to reality

When Gender Is Cultural

- Deut 22:5 forbids confusion of gender

The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment: for all that do so are abomination unto the LORD thy God.

- We could argue about the implications of this text, but it must mean something
- Gender-related dress maybe culturally determined, but should generally be respected by Christians
- Deut 22:5 forbids confusion of gender
- 1 Cor 11:1-16 requires us to respect culturally constructed gendered behaviors

³ *But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God....* ¹⁴ *Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him?* ¹⁵ *But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering.*

- Maleness and femaleness are realities
- God assigns specific, gendered roles to male and female (v3)
- Even when role behavior is culturally constructed, it should be respected (v14-15)
-

God's Word Corrects Gendered Behaviors

- Gendered behaviors should reflect how males and females stand before God
- Gendered behaviors should also reflect how males and females rightly relate to each other
- Gendered behaviors should usually respect culturally constructed gender roles as part of telling the truth
- BUT...

God's Word Corrects Gendered Behaviors

- Gendered behaviors should reflect how males and females stand before God
- Gendered behaviors should also reflect how males and females rightly relate to each other
- Gendered behaviors should usually respect culturally constructed gender roles as part of telling the truth
- BUT...
- Men and women must embrace distinct roles within marriage (Eph 5:21-33; Col 3:18-19; 1 Pet 3:1-2)
- Masculine and feminine behavior within the church must reflect biblical norms (1 Cor 14:34-35; 1 Tim 2:8-15)
- Personal deportment should avoid both gender confusion and gender accentuation, focusing on character (1 Tim 2:9-10; 1 Pet 3:3-7; Titus 2:1-8)
- The fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22-23) revises all visions of gender

Gender Dysphoria and Transgenderism

- These terms cover a lot of territory
- In general, they denote someone who is uncomfortable in their sexed body or who wishes they were the other sex
- People have lots of reasons for this kind of discomfort: abuse, paraphilia, stage of life, poor role modeling

- In many or most instances, people can be helped to become more comfortable with their bodies

Rapid Onset Gender Dysphoria

- Occurs in children
- Seems to come out of nowhere
- Usually resolves itself by early adulthood
- Typically promoted by social contagion (peers, authority figures, media, attention-granting responses)
- Has led to widespread chemical and surgical alteration
- Is now producing a large number of “detransitioners”

Recommended Book on ROGD

Miriam Grossman, M.D., *Lost in Trans Nation: A Child Psychiatrist's Guide Out of the Madness* (Brattleboro, VT: Skyhorse Publishing, 2023).

- Grossman is not a Christian
- She has considerable professional experience in this area
- She understands the damage that the current LGBTQIA+ agenda is doing to children

Gender and Discipleship

- - We ought to instill right and biblical understandings of gender in our people, especially our young people
- We have sometimes been overly influenced by alien visions of gender (e.g., Barbie or Rambo)
- Some young people who think they are trans are reacting against some distorted model of gender; what they want to avoid is being *that kind* of man or woman
- Some are simply struggling with issues of puberty—as we all did
- We need a place for women who are (e.g.) intellectual and opinionated, or outdoorsy and tomboyish

- We need a place for men who are (e.g.) contemplative, artistic, or who despise athletic competition
- Genuine masculinity / femininity are part of discipleship
- We should welcome people who experience gender dysphoria, and we should help them to excel in their natural genders

Transgenderism and Culture

- Adults who modify their bodies chemically or surgically to resemble the other sex are sinning
- Not every sin should be a crime
- Children should never be encouraged in dysphoria; it will usually reverse itself, and no “transition” is possible
- Chemical or surgical alteration of children’s bodies to resemble the opposite sex is an (often irreversible) evil and should be a crime
- If you are a parent in a state that undermines parental rights, consider moving to another state
- Women must be protected in women’s private spaces: men claiming to be women should be kept out
- Women must be protected in women’s sports: men claiming to be women should be disqualified
- You will rarely encounter a more extreme example of toxic masculinity than from men claiming to be women when their desire to be treated as women is thwarted
- Speaking the truth means using the correct pronouns and refusing to concede that people can change their genders

What About the “I” in LGBTQIA+?

- Sometimes this condition is called “Intersex”
- Sometimes it is called a “Disorder of Sexual Development” (DSD)
- Sometimes it is called a “Difference of Sexual Development” (DSD)
- The older name was “Hermaphroditism,” but this term is now considered inaccurate

How To Think About DSDs

- Virtually no part of embodiment is untouched by the Fall
- Some people are born without eyes, ears, hands, or even cerebra (anencephaly)
- Some are born with organs that do not perform their natural function
- These are all departures from normal; that is why they are called disorders or disabilities
- Not surprisingly, some people are born with sexual ambiguities (mixtures of male and female appearance)

Karyotype vs Genotype vs Phenotype

- A karyotype is an organism’s complete set of chromosomes, including their number and structure
- A genotype is the genetic constitution of the organism, but its effects can be altered by environment
- A phenotype is the organism’s observable characteristics, traits, and appearance
- Any of these may deviate from normal
- They may also deviate from each other

What Are DSDs?

- Some are genetic: Klinefelter Syndrome (XXY) or Turner Syndrome (45, X0)
- Some are hormonal (Androgen Insensitivity Syndrome or Congenital Adrenal Hyperplasia)
- Not all of these conditions lead to sexual ambiguity: people with Klinefelter are still identifiably male and people with Turner are still identifiably female
- Some of these conditions do lead to sexual ambiguity by suppressing or confusing sexual characteristics

An Informed, Christian Approach to DSDs

- DSDs that result in sexual ambiguity are extremely rare: one in several thousand births
- DSDs are defects and disabilities; they are not sinful or shameful (though they are personal and usually private)
- DSDs do not alter the binary nature of human sexuality; they are not a third sex, and they do not make male and female into a continuum
- People with DSDs have to make hard choices; we should help them.

Case Study 1

- Lori is a masculine-appearing female student who begins to experience menstrual difficulties; her health declines
- During a hysterectomy, Lori is discovered to have undescended testicles, which are also removed
- Lori's body responds poorly to estrogen treatments; her health continues to decline
- Testosterone treatments stabilize Lori's decline, but deepen her voice, enlarge muscles, and give her a beard
- Question: Should Lori continue to live as an ambiguous female, or should she become Larry and live as a male?

Case Study 2

- A paternity test excludes both the child's alleged father and her birth mother
- Blood samples shows that the mother has XY (male) blood cells; she is her daughter's uncle
- Female-appearing XY people with DSDs are usually infertile
- Hair and cheek samples from the mother test XX (female)
- Conclusion: the mother is a chimera who absorbed a male fraternal twin during development

What DSDs Are Not

- Same Sex Attraction or Activity
- Transgenderism
- Merely matters of perception or identification
- Sinful or shameful

When we look at the LGBTQIA+ stack, we should think, “One of these things is not like the others”

DSDs are actual, physical, biological departures from normal—they are disabilities

Human Value and Dignity

- All humans are made in God's image (Gen 1:26-28)
- All humans are objects of redemption (Titus 2:11-12)
- Therefore, all humans have value and dignity
- We must accept and treasure all humans in their persons
- Acceptance of persons does not imply affirmation of inordinate affections or sinful actions
- Some affections and actions merit exposure and reproof (Eph 5:11-13)

What Should We Do?

- Speak the truth; speak it kindly and tactfully
- Recapture preempted categories such as identity
- Love and welcome all people
- Reprove shameful conduct; offer help to all
- Welcome the repentant into our assemblies
- Work toward legal protections for women and children
- Prepare for the possibility of persecution; people will want to take your livelihood, reputation, platform, children, and life