

Transgender: Truth and Love

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Introduction

Who am I? Why am I here? What is my purpose? At one time or another everyone has, in some way, sought to answer these basic questions of life. People want to define themselves and they want to be part of a community. We look for meaning and purpose, and we often desire to be part of something much greater than ourselves. Unfortunately, our conclusions about who we are and the reason for our existence often fall short of biblical truth. The very things people are seeking are on the heart of God. They are simply looking in the wrong places and making a dangerous exchange. I will discuss this exchange in detail later in this pamphlet.

“Meaningless! Meaningless!” says the Teacher. “Utterly Meaningless!” (Ec. 1:2) After seeing all things under the sun, Solomon determined he had chased after the wind (Ecc. 1:17). In the end, he comes to the conclusion that fearing God and keeping His commandments is the whole duty of man (Ecc. 12:13). As I read and researched the topic of gender confusion a focus on meaning and purpose seemed to surface in many of the articles and testimonies. It seemed as if many people who considered this lifestyle option were searching for fulfillment and satisfaction. The search is not wrong but their conclusions are wrong and lack the true satisfaction they desire. They are looking to the wrong person, themselves, and in the wrong place, the world, for these answers.

God’s two greatest commandments, love God and love others, sum up the purpose of life. Loving others includes loving the transgender. The question becomes, what does biblical love for those who identify themselves as transgender look like?

My desire is to help you know how to love those who identify as transgender or those who are questioning their gender and to help those who know someone who is confused about their gender. I would like to present a biblical response to this issue and equip you to speak truth to the issue. Some examples used in the pamphlet may not seem, on the surface, to apply to the topic of transgender. Outward actions and appearances, of others, often entangle our thoughts about a situation like gender confusion. We end up focusing on the practice of an individual rather than what may be going on in the heart of the individual. This focus can result in missing the root issues. I hope to help you understand that transgender ideology is rooted in the same wrong beliefs as other wrong beliefs and ideas. As you understand the root (heart) issues you may have less fear of speaking about this topic to your children and others. At this point, I want to encourage you to stop and ask God to teach you before reading further.

Before considering helping others to think and act biblically in the area of gender identity a little log removal may be in order. We need to purify our own hearts before we can rightly consider the choices of others. **All** sin requires the Savior’s death to pay the penalty and break its power. The question is, do you and I view our own sin as requiring the same sacrifice of Christ as sins that begin with LGBT?

Do you “gag” when we hear of a person who engages in these practices? What if I use the words adultery, pornography, sinful anger, anxiety or grumbling? These sins all require the sacrificial

death of Jesus for forgiveness to be granted. These sins come from the same root of self-pleasure and idolatry as those that start with LGBT. I have heard the word “absurd” used in reference to some of the news articles focused on gender confusion. Absurd may not be an incorrect term to use but have you used it when discussing complaining? If I stopped to meditate on my sovereign, wise, loving Heavenly Father I should conclude that complaining is absurd. He only ever acts with His glory and my good in mind.

However, we often categorize lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender as more repulsive. This repulsion may be from a focus on the outward manifestation rather than the heart from which they come. We should follow the example of Christ and communicate love and compassion when speaking about this issue (Mt. 9:36, 20:34, Mk. 6:34, Jn. 8:1-11, Col 3:12). Again, I encourage you to stop and ask God to help you see your own sin as against Him and deserving of eternal separation from Him. Thank Him for His free gift of salvation that was not and could not be earned by your works.

A Righteous Response and a Biblical Responsibility

What is the right response, of believers, to those who are confused or questioning their understanding of their identity as it relates to their “gender”? The righteous response should be heartbreak as expressed in Psalm 119:136, *“My eyes shed streams of water, because they do not keep Your law.”* Righteous anger may be appropriate, at times, but not sinful anger and rage. Jesus expressed compassion when He encountered people who were lost and hurting. God is glorified when we love, in action, those who are not experiencing His peace, hope and joy.

Not long ago, much of what was done in “darkness” is now broadcast in the “light”. As a teen, I had a desire to live the way I wanted to live but at the same time I knew it was not right so I sinned in “secret”. I am thankful to God for allowing me to remember my sin choices and acknowledge my incredible need for His grace because my greatest need is the same as the need of everyone. Some of the sins I committed, in hiding, are now celebrated and encouraged in our world. We cannot approve or celebrate this type of thinking about self. If we do we are condemning the person who thinks this way. We are agreeing with Satan who said, to Eve, “You will not surely die”. There is no need for you and me to offer hope found only in Christ if this is not a sin issue (Prov. 12:15, 14:12, 16:25). If those who are confused about gender are not in need of the saving and enabling grace of God then Jesus does not need to seek them.

There may be folks reading this who are tempted with gender identity confusion or perhaps your beloved family member is confused. If you are enduring personal pain regarding this issue my hope is to express compassion and love as I help you think biblically.

I remember when some students in the high school youth group I attended found out about my immorality. They pulled away from me. I had other friends and I acted like I did not care. Years later, after God saved me, I learned that love speaks truth. I do not hold anyone responsible for my sin however I did experience rejection from others because of my sin. God uses experiences like this to grow compassion in our hearts for people, made in His image, who are making sin choices. If it has been your habit to pull away I encourage you to lean in and offer truth, love and hope.

Christians have a responsibility to destroy speculations, and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ (2 Cor. 10:5, Heb. 5:14). Gender identity confusion is set up against the knowledge of God. Rather than respond with disgust we need to be prepared to enter into a dialogue with those who are confused. You and I are responsible for holding a biblical view of the Bible, Truth, reality, God, and man. These beliefs will impact what we believe when we hear a news report about a 6-year-old girl who is dressing like a boy or a 17-year-old male who has joined the girl's track team at his school.

As opportunities arise let's commit to using Scripture as our basis for wisdom and understanding about our topic. Do you believe that Scripture contains wisdom and knowledge and truth for life's questions including gender confusion? David said, "*The law of the Lord is perfect, restoring the soul; The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes*" (Ps. 19:7-8; see also Jn. 17:17, 2 Tim 3:16-17). Where the Bible speaks, God speaks. Scripture is over and against the world. In love, let's uphold Scripture as sufficient for training us for this work.

Overview of the Pamphlet

I want to give you an idea of where we are headed on the journey of understanding transgenderism and learning to offer truth and love to others. First, I will discuss the need for

this pamphlet and why I began to study this topic. The world is changing rapidly in the area of acceptable behaviors and choices as it relates to gender. I have included some information from news headlines, laws and ways in which people view or understand the world around them.

We will go on from there to what God says about Himself, mankind, marriage, males and females and God's plan and restriction given in the Garden. These topics are foundational to our understanding of the world therefore, we need to start in the beginning in order to biblically think about today.

Our journey will not go far in Genesis before we discover how the choice of Adam and Eve has affected sexuality. Satan tempted Eve, who gave in to the temptation, and everything changed. The choices of Adam and Eve have long term consequences which we are experiencing today. When Satan set himself up against the knowledge of God he offered Eve a world focused on her. Her choice brought about a desire for autonomy which we all now experience. God offered true freedom in the Garden and the world offers false "freedom". I hope to help you discern the difference between the world's view of gender and sexuality and the biblical view of gender and sexuality.

Many terms are used for the way some people think about themselves. I will define some of those terms from a secular view and a biblical view. As you hear these terms you can then filter them through the Word of God. Secular sources are offering theories about the cause of transgender thinking. They also offer "answers" to confusion about gender. I will explain the more popular theories and treatments and give you a biblical response to these secular ideas.

It is important to understand that transgender ideology is about how a person thinks about his or her own body. I will define idolatry and give examples of how it can look and sound on the outside, which ultimately reflects the heart. Body idolatry is prevalent in our culture but it is not new to contemporary times. This idolatry is a long-standing problem which presents itself in different ways at different times and in different people. The stakes are high when we are discussing a heart problem which is set up against our Creator. God never intended for us to find satisfaction in the use of our body. As I said earlier, attempting this type of satisfaction falls short of the glory of God and His purpose in giving us life.

The last section will cover not only how to offer hope and help for those confused about gender, but will also explain the great privilege believers have to share truth and love. God said the harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. You can be one of the laborers in the field of gender confusion. Instead of truth, the world offers deceptive lies as "answers" to questions of meaning and purpose. In fact, one does not have to go looking for lies. They are proclaimed as necessary for a "true" understanding of life and purpose. These lies are prolific in marketing, politics, media, and education. Children's books about gender confusion are read in public elementary schools. Youth are hearing these lies and in some cases embracing them. You and I, as believers, can know the truth found in the person of Jesus Christ. We are given the incredible opportunity to share truth and love because we live in a time when sin is being presented as a right and privilege. It is easier to "find" those who are confused and hurting in regard to their gender. You and I appear as lights in the world, as we hold fast the word of life.

Why Do We Need This Pamphlet?

Truth is on the line because it is called into question by the transgender movement. Proponents of transgenderism are proposing a "truth" that is different for different people. This idea of "personal truth" is not biblical. Jesus is The Truth therefore, truth is reflective of His character and not based on personal preferences. The world calls our preferences "personal truth"; what is true for each individual. God defines reality and His reality does not waver and change. His design for His creation is determinative. God does not have different truths for different individuals.

In an article titled *All of Us Sinners, None of Us Freaks*, author Tony Reinke says, "A big blunder in the transgender conversation is to define one's identity, even in contrast, with biological facts prior to transition. Transgender stories rely on a personal right to cut off biological personhood in mid-story. Once the decision is made, the transition is started. One gender is made authentic, and the other is deemed inauthentic. Realness is redefined."

(www.Desiring God.org)

The idea of determining what is true for self is revealed in a testimony from *Understanding Gender Dysphoria*, by Mark Yarhouse. Yarhouse describes "homosexual gender dysphorics" who maintain that their sexual interest in other men is actually heterosexual because "inside"

they are really women. They also prefer partners who concur with the transsexual's self-evaluation that he is "really" a woman (pg. 96-97).

If you and I are going to stand against any part of the LGBT ideology we will be considered wrong, at times, and maybe even haters. We should expect resistance when speaking truth about this issue. When rejection comes your way, remember it is not you being rejected but God. We cannot diminish truth and lead people to Christ, who is the Truth, at the same time. We have to be willing to take the risk and stand on truth as stated in God's Word. Personal truth is a lie masquerading as truth. Let's expose this lie and offer true love in the form of a Person: Jesus.

My husband, Dave, and I desire to teach our five kids how to think and speak biblically about identity. We want to help prepare them to give an answer about gender identity from the Word of God. I decided to study the topic in Scripture and I began to listen to the news and read news reports on the topic. I heard more and more reports of people who were making life-changing decisions about their gender or parent's stories of children who expressed a desire to make this change. During this time, friends asked how to address the topic of sex, homosexuality and transgender with their kids. Parents were sharing what their children heard in school, from friends and in other settings. I read reports of cities and states writing laws and ordinances about this issue. Laws regarding bathroom use, pronoun use and care that could or could not be given to those who wanted to live as someone other than who they are from the womb were passed while I studied the subject. What you are reading is the fruit of what started as a labor of love for my own children.

Here are a few headlines I encountered while doing this study. It is not my intention to alarm but to inform by including these headlines. There are many headlines I could have chosen but I wanted to give a sample that reflects the reality that this subject is permeating all aspects of life.

[Ban lifted on Medicare coverage for sex change surgery-](#) Washington Post, By Ariana Eunjung Cha, May 30, 2014

[My Brother's Pregnancy and the Making of a New American Family,](#) Time Magazine, by Jesse Hempel, Sept. 16, 2016

[Is God Transgender?](#) The New York Times, By MARK SAMETH, AUG. 12, 2016

Transgender at 7: Tyler gets a legal name change. By Petula Dvorak , May 22, 2014,
Washington Post

Transgender on Tinder? Now You Can Identify Yourself That Way, The New York
Times, By LIAM STACK NOV. 15, 2016

'Emma is a boy' An Alpharetta mom adapts to life with a transgender child. Atlanta
Journal-Constitution, By Melissa McWilliams October 23, 2016

A Book about a dress-loving boy was supposed to teach kinds acceptance-until
lawmakers complained. By Amy Wang, Washington Post, March 23, 2017

Disneyland Paris Apologizes for Banning Little Boy From 'Princess for a Day'
Experience. By Daniella Silva, NBC News, Aug. 30, 2017

Illinois Purges Social Workers and Foster Families Who Don't 'Facilitate'
Transgenderism, By Mary Hasson, The Federalist, May 30, 2017

Gender-Neutral Pronoun "They" Adopted by Associated Press The journalist's bible will
finally help reporters talk about non-binary people, By Erin Blakemore,
smithsonian.com, March 27, 2017

Public Library Hosts 'Genderful' Event for Kids Featuring Transgender Musician, by
Ashley Rae Goldenberg, mrctv.org, Nov. 27, 2017

Some elementary schools are allowing the reading of books, in the classroom, that promote the idea of transgenderism. These books are often read without parental knowledge or permission. *Jacob's New Dress* was set to be included in lesson plans for first-grade students at Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools in North Carolina. The book was abruptly pulled from the reading list after several teachers complained. They replaced it with *Red: A Crayon's Story* about a red crayon that self-identifies as blue. The Charlotte Observer reported that the school board is getting ready to add sexual orientation and "Gender identity/Expression" to its multiculturalism policy.

Colleges and Universities are writing policies which allow for students and faculty to choose their PGP (preferred gender pronoun). Faculty and students are being taught how to use these pronouns in the name of “gender inclusivity”. Faculty of Vanderbilt University (fall 2016) welcomed students with a gender inclusivity poster titled: What Should I Call You? As the title implies, the poster’s purpose is helping students use the preferred pronoun(s) of students and faculty. The poster includes written examples of how to apologize when one does not use the preferred pronoun. (<https://www.vanderbilt.edu/facultysenate/engage/PRONOUNPOSTER.pdf>)

The chart below lists some terms used to identify the “orientation” of some people. Definitions of some of these terms will be given later.

Cisgender	Female-to-male (FtM)
Gender bending	Genderfluid
Cross-dressing	Genderqueer
Third sex or third gender	Drag queen
Transsexual	Drag king
Male-to-female (MtF)	Transvestism
	Intersex

As Christians, we should use Bible words when speaking about this issue. The language used by those who are pushing the LGBT ideology may be changing frequently but God’s Word stands firm (Ps. 33:11; Prov. 19:21; Isa. 46:10, 55:11; Mt. 5:18, 24:35; Lk. 16:17). Christians need to be careful to speak about this in a way that leads people to Jesus.

Earlier, I mentioned laws and city ordinances being changed and passed to protect and promote the LGBT ideology. Laws are also being passed regarding the care physicians and psychiatrists can or cannot give to patients who identify as a sex which differs from their biology.

A bill recently passed in Canada that restricts “discrimination” on the basis of gender “expression”. California has enacted similar legislation. There can be monetary penalties for those who use a person’s non-preferred pronoun. California now has three options when applying for a driver’s license: male, female or non-binary.

“Laws have been passed in CA, NJ and MA barring psychiatrists, even with parental permission, from striving to restore natural gender feelings to a transgender minor.” (WSJ, 5/13/16)

Boynton Beach, FL outlawed “conversion therapy”, a method aimed at converting a person’s gender identity or sexual orientation, on minors in Jan. 2017. Violators can be fined \$500 or sued by the city.

New Illinois policies mandate foster parents and staff be "LGBTQ-affirming" and "facilitate" exploration—*Illinois Purges Social Workers And Foster Families Who Don't 'Facilitate' Transgenderism, The Federalist* (Mary Hasson).

It is easy to be tempted with despair and fear when thinking about the moral decline of society but we can hold fast to the truth that Jesus will build His church, and the gates of hell will not prevail against it. In the world we will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, Jesus has overcome the world.

The popular topic of gender identity is included in initials that are fairly common in our culture. You may be familiar with the initials: LGBT, LGB. But what about: GLBTQ, QUILTBAG (queer/questioning, undecided, intersex, lesbian, transgender/transsexual, bisexual, allied, asexual, gay, genderqueer)? These are terms we can familiarize ourselves with in order to be prepared to give an answer for the hope we have in Jesus. Even if we want to ignore and avoid the subject of transgenderism it is not going away, and will increasingly become accepted as “normal” so let’s be prepared, biblically, to speak about it.

When it comes to issues pertaining to the initials, LGBTQ, we can be equipped to speak truth by studying the Word of God. Believers can be ready to give an answer to the most basic questions in life. I am hearing these questions more frequently in counseling sessions. The intention of this booklet is to prepare and equip you to speak truth with love, compassion and boldness. God IS the answer to those questions. Many of your friends and loved ones are searching. Are you willing and ready to give a biblical answer? Are you engaging in the conversations and creating an environment where they can happen? The way you and I speak about this issue will reveal our belief system about it.

Everyone believes something about the topic of transgenderism and the beliefs of everyone can be placed in one of two worldviews. Let me define “worldview” before going any further. Worldview is the basic “frame of reference” by which a person interprets reality (facts, objects, events etc.). Every person is committed to some presuppositions by which they interpret the

world. These presuppositions are the lenses they “wear”, as they view the world around them. These presuppositions are the foundation for what a person believes about the meaning and purpose of their own life.

Every worldview, at its core, can be placed into one of two categories.

- 1) Secular/Autonomous worldview: man assigning significance to who/what he chooses and interpreting the world without reference to God’s revelation, plan or purpose.

“For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures. Therefore, God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them. For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen” Rom. 1:21-25.

Knowing God but not glorifying Him or giving Him thanks and exchanging the truth of God for a lie will have practical implications in a person’s life.

- 2) Biblical/Servant worldview: God, who created all things, is sovereign and Lord, and because we are subject to His authority, the nature of our thoughts reflects our status as servants (Josh. 24:16-18; Lk. 9:23)

“Bless the Lord, all you His hosts, you who serve Him, doing His will. Bless the Lord, all you works of His, in the places of His dominion; Bless the Lord, O my soul” Ps 103:21-22.

If we are going to help those God puts in our path who are confused or participating in a transgender lifestyle, we need to move beyond simply understanding their beliefs, thoughts, and experience. In other words, it is important to hear their conclusions and ask how they came to these conclusions but we can’t stop there. We need to go further and inform them of the truth. Believers can and should develop a biblical worldview about gender identity. Understanding this topic from a biblical worldview will help you think, speak and respond in a God-honoring way when you hear what the world says regarding this topic and when you speak to someone who is confused.

Biblical Worldview of God, Mankind, Marriage, God's Plan and Restrictions and Identity

“What do you think about transgenderism?” A friend of my teenage daughter asked her this question. My daughter and I talked about their conversation a few days after it occurred. As she told how the conversation unfolded, it was evident that she answered it according to Scripture without stating her answer came from the truth of God's Word. I spoke with her about answering questions of morality by communicating where her answer is coming from, the true Word of God. I took the opportunity to remind her that as a Christian she has the privilege of speaking truth and should be careful about giving what could be misunderstood as merely her opinion.

A young woman once told me she was pansexual. I asked a few questions about her definition of the word pansexual and how she came to that conclusion about herself. She told about searching the internet because she was interested in discovering why she was here on earth. Her search brought up a test which she took. The test results indicated she was pansexual. She was willing to believe the results of the test. This young lady searched the internet to find an answer to a question that is answered in Scripture and in the person of Jesus Christ. The sad part is that once she saw the results of the on online test she thought she had the answer. The internet influenced her thinking.

Which potential authority is influencing your thinking and counsel? Many Christians will listen to other “Christians” giving unbiblical advice and desire to follow it because it is easier and makes them “feel” loving and non-judgmental. Yet it is our loving God who commands us to make judgements using His Word to determine right and wrong. If you are not using Scripture as the authoritative Word of God to inform your thinking and counsel, please make a decision to learn from your Heavenly Father who desires to renew your mind with His truth.

We need to line up under God's authority not with those who say what we or others want to hear (2 Tim. 4:3). We must choose between holding fast to God's precious written Word or being tossed here and there by the written words of a blogger, the media and at times our friends. (Eph. 4:14) With so many changes in so many areas of life being initiated in our country it is easy to get caught up in the information on the subject. We do benefit from being informed about law, education and medical changes but the only eternal benefit is from our diligent study and application of the Word of God.

A study of the attributes of God is crucial in the life of any believer. The more we know His name (attributes), the more we will trust Him. There are several key attributes that apply to our understanding of God and man as it relates to the topic of transgenderism.

God is sovereign, and He is the supreme ruler of His creation. He is the author of history and owns all things first by right of creation and second by purchasing it by the blood of His Son shed on Calvary. (Acts. 4:24-31; 1 Tim. 6:13-16; Eph.1) This means He is sovereign over the conception, DNA and growth of each and every individual ever conceived.

God is good. He is the standard and definition of good. Calling something good declares it to be like God in some way. (Ps. 107:1, 136:1) After learning this about God's attribute of goodness I have become more thoughtful of the use of the word "good". We should never call "good" what God calls wrong or evil.

God is Creator. He created the heavens and earth and all it contains including man and woman. Creation is planned by God and for God. (Gen. 1-2, 14:19; Isa. 40:28; Col 1:15-17) He created mankind for the purpose of bringing Him glory yet we so often live as if He gave us life to live to our pleasure.

God is a God of peace not disorder. He turned chaos into order in the beginning. (1 Cor. 12:33; Rom. 15:22; Phil 4:9) I will talk a bit more about the source of confusion and disorder later in the pamphlet.

As we think about the meaning and purpose of life, these attributes must be in the center of our thoughts. Believing God is sovereign will influence what role a person believes he or she plays in His world. Knowing He is good will influence thoughts about the human body and what God says about the way it is put together. Believing He is Creator will influence beliefs about how and why anyone is here. This will also influence the decisions made about how to steward a body.

Similar to the importance of growing in an understanding of the attributes of God we should ask for God's help in understanding how to view mankind as we relate to God.

Our anthropology (theology dealing with the origin, nature, and destiny of human beings) will determine how we view the topic of gender identity confusion. God created man(kind) in His

own image, in the image and likeness of God He created him; male and female He created them (Gen 1:26-27, 5:1-2, 9:6, 1 Cor. 11:7, James 3:9). These verses answer the questions of “who am I” and “why am I here?” God gave life to man in order to put His character on display.

God made mankind and told them to rule over His creation. He, also, gave them a particular limited sphere of sovereignty. “*Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth*” (Gen. 1:28). God created male and female both equally in His image. However, man and woman each have different God given roles. Each role is designed to represent a specific aspect of the character of God and ultimately represent the gospel to a dark world. God made man first and told him that his rule over the earth is limited. God spoke to Adam alone about His restriction regarding the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Gen 2:7, 15-17). Adam was responsible for that information. Later, we will see how he decided to handle that command.

The verses above answer to the question of, “what is my purpose?”. The purpose of being fruitful and multiplying have to do with filling the earth with the glory of God (Num. 14:20-21; Ps. 72:19; Isa. 6:3; Hab. 2:14). God told Adam his purpose. Part of the instruction had to do with procreating in order to fill the earth with image bearers of God. The way God designed Adam did not allow him to fulfill that purpose without a helper.

Then God said, “*It is not good for man to be alone; I will make a suitable helper for him*” (Gen 2:18). God said Adam needed a helper, Adam did not ask for a helper nor did he say he was lonely. God had a helper in mind who would complement (complete, finish) Adam in his God given role of cultivating the garden and filling the earth with His glory. It is important to know that there were different roles and responsibilities for the man and his wife before The Fall. These differences are not a *result* of The Fall. God gave man the responsibility of headship in the marriage relationship. God gave man responsibilities in His creation so it could sustain the people who would fill it. Adam alone, as God has designed him, could not have fulfilled his God given role to be fruitful and multiply. He needed a wife. The God-given role of helper is not a lesser role for a woman. The same word, “helper” is used by God in reference to Himself. God declared this relationship very good.

The story is probably familiar but worth repeating. God caused Adam to fall into a deep sleep then He took out one of his ribs, and made a woman from that rib. Adam recognized his wife as

his perfect companion. He said, “*this is now bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called woman for she was taken out of man. For this reason, a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.*” What reason? She is part of him. The man and his wife were both naked and felt no shame. In their perfect state, their thoughts were not evil, impure or perverse. They are comfortable in their God-given bodies and their marriage relationship.

We are created for the incredible privilege of bringing glory to God (Isa. 43:7, Col 3:10, Romans 8:28-29, Ps. 72:19). We all want to live for something greater than ourselves. God put eternity in our hearts. He created us to be influencers and impact makers. We simply get our focus on the wrong reason for impact and influence. We are not here to make a name for ourselves. All too often, we focus on what we can get from our impact rather than on what we can give or how we can make God’s name great. We get entangled in the world’s trappings and forget we are here with a far greater and eternal purpose.

The Lord God, in His grace, offered protection and freedom when He commanded the man saying, “*From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die.*” Here God set a limit on man’s rule on earth by placing a restriction in the Garden. This command was part of what God called “good”. God offers life if they obey and He warns that death would come if they disobey. Before we go on with the narrative of Creation I want to take some time to discuss marriage from a biblical worldview.

Viewing marriage through the lens of Scripture allows us to combat the lies being shouted in our culture. We need to combat the lie that says we can define or redefine this covenant relationship established by God. And the lie that says opposite-sex marriage only *seemed natural* as stated by Justice Anthony Kennedy. I will get back to his words later.

God instituted a covenant of marriage in the garden (Gen 2:24). Marriage is one of the primary means by which God illustrates the gospel before a watching world. Marriage is designed by God to reflect the relationship between Christ and His church. A husband is to be to his wife what Christ is to the church. The wife is to be to her husband what the church is to Christ (Eph. 5:22-32). God referred to Himself as a husband to the house of Israel (Jer. 31:32). Marriage

between a man and a woman for life is an earthly picture of a biblical truth: Christ, the groom, and the church, His bride.

God is Creator, and King and mankind does not have the authority to redefine what He has declared moral and good. This beautiful design and purpose of the Creator, the covenant unity of one male with one female, creates the environment for fulfilling the creation mandate to be fruitful and multiply. This accomplishes the filling of the earth with God's glory (Ps. 72:19).

God, the giver of life, assigned our biological sex. David viewed his body as fearfully and wonderfully made by God. He praised God for how he was knit together by God (Ps. 139:13-14). God chose our sex before the foundation of the earth. God, when speaking to Jeremiah said, *"before I formed you I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I have appointed you a prophet to the nations"* (Jer. 1:5). God had determined Jeremiah's sex and purpose in life. When speaking of God, Job said, *"Your hands fashioned me altogether...remember, now that you have made me as clay. The Spirit of God has made me and the breath of the Almighty gives me life"* (Ps. 139:13-16, Job 10:8-12, 12:10, 31:15, 33:4).

The truth that God made man in His image should affect the way we use and treat our body and the bodies of others (Gen 9:6, James 3:9-10). Our bodies do not belong to us, and we are to offer them to God for His purposes (1 Cor. 6:19-20, 2 Cor. 5:15, Lev. 20:22-26, Rom. 12:1). *"The earth is the Lord's, and all it contains, the world, and those who dwell in it"* (Ps. 24:1). The believer's body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. The "house" in which God's Spirit resides. The way in which a person uses their body either honors or dishonors God. One author offers this perspective, "I would rather be what God chose to make me than the most glorious creature that I could think of. For to have been thought about-born in God's thoughts- and then made by God is the dearest, grandest, most precious thing in all thinking" (George MacDonald: *Helps for the Weary Soul*)

Our body is an earthly tent, "temporary housing". We should be good stewards of our body but we should not spend more time remodeling the exterior than we do renovating our heart (Mt. 10:28-31, 1 Cor. 6:19-20). We should not allow sin to reign in our mortal body by obeying the lusts of our flesh. But, rather we should present ourselves to God as those alive from the dead (Rom. 6:11-13, 1 Cor. 9:27).

The problem of desiring to be something other than what God made us to be resides in the heart. Believers should define themselves in and through God alone. We need to see our lives from God's point of view. A believer's identity is found in Christ. Paul uses the term "in Christ" fourteen times in the book of Ephesians. Our heavenly Father calls us dearly loved and has marked us with the promise of His Holy Spirit. As believers, we carry His identity, no longer separated from Him but united with Him. An unbeliever is fearfully and wonderfully made as well. All humans are made in the image of God and therefore are to be treated as precious. As David praised God for knitting him together he said God saw his unformed substance and ordained his days before one day happened (Ps. 139:16). This truth is reflected in Scripture when we learn of God speaking of future births.

The foretelling of births in Scripture are all male children. Jesus is foretold in Genesis 3:15 and others followed- Isaac, Esau and Jacob, Samuel, Samson, son of the Shunammite woman, John the Baptist, and again, Jesus. God set every first-born male apart unto Himself, "*Every firstborn male that opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord*" (Ex. 13:2, 12, 15, Lk. 2:22-23). Since Christian husbands are to reflect Christ's relationship with His bride, by how they love their wives, they are enemies of Satan. God's enemy desires to thwart God's purposes in making males and females different and with different roles. Confusion regarding the issue of gender is one result of wrong thinking about God's purposes for His creation.

One of our five kids is a boy. My husband and I have been intentional in teaching him God's heart for males and the responsibilities he has as a male. We do not believe the world and particularly the entertainment industry help boys and men know God's intention in making them different from girls and women.

Statistics show two or three times as many men are transitioning to female than females are to male. When David was dying he charged Solomon saying, "*I am going by way of the earth. Be strong, therefore, and show yourself a man.*" Paul said, "*Be on the alert, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong.*"

Genesis 3's Effect on Sexuality

Satan rebelled against God before he tempted Eve. He rebelled against his Creator, by declaring he will raise his throne above the stars of God. He desires to usurp God's sovereign rule by becoming king over God (Isa. 14:12-17; Ezek. 28:11-19).

Satan's attack in the Garden is not solely against God's Word but against God's created order. Satan attacks the marriage relationship between Adam and Eve by approaching Eve with the temptation. He should have spoken to the head of the home. He casts a shadow of doubt over God's restriction, and he lied about the consequences by saying "you surely will not die". He accuses God of withholding something good from Eve. He says God knows she will be like God (KJV-be as gods) if she eats. Adam and Eve were made in the image of God therefore, they are already *like* God in some ways. Literally, Satan was saying Eve would be a god (KJV-be as gods). Satan who wanted to be above God now tempted Eve with a similar idea. She ate the fruit and gave some to Adam who was with her. Adam did not obey God or exercise his headship by deciding to eat the fruit as well. He was passive and not protective. This decision helped Satan accomplish his desires. And Satan continues to attack God's created order today.

When speaking of Satan's temptation, John MacArthur Jr. said, "*Bypassing the leadership of the man, the serpent went after the woman, who was by design the follower. He promised Eve that if she ate the forbidden fruit she would not die as God has warned, but that, in fact she would become a god herself (vv.4-5). He succeeded in enticing her to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. She in turn persuaded Adam to commit the same sin, thereby making Satan's attack on Adam's headship a success*" (Different by Design).

Did you catch it?

This is the first sex-role reversal in the history of mankind. This reversal set in motion a reversal of God's creation and created order. This reversal is only made right in Christ and will only be perfectly right in heaven. At that moment, sin and death entered the world. Adam, Eve, and the serpent receive curses from God, for their choices. These curses continue to impact the world and mankind. We experience and witness the consequences of Adam and Eve's choice in the Garden every day.

Adam and Eve decided to cover themselves and then hid. As the only people in the Garden, who is going to “shame” them? Why did they hide? They were naked before they sinned, and now they are not naked but covered with leaves. Andrew T. Walker, in his book, *God and the Transgender Debate*, says, “*The first result of the first rejection of God is that people feel ashamed of, and awkward about their bodies.*” They are guilty and seeking a “cover” of their own making.

God cursed the serpent and along with a curse God, in His love and grace, proclaims the hope of a coming Savior (Gen. 3:15). One day, God will bring a seed from the woman who will be an enemy of Satan. The seed who is called “He” will crush the head of Satan. The gospel message gives hope to Adam and Eve. This hope is revealed when Eve declares, “I have gotten a man from the Lord”, after the birth of her first son, Cain. Perhaps she believes this is “He”.

God cursed the woman for listening to the serpent. She should have consulted her husband. God declares that now her desire will be for her husband. This is a desire to rule her husband. God says her husband will rule over her. Adam’s headship has not changed but now Eve wants to be over Adam. Now their relationship will be marred with selfishness and self-will. Instead of obeying the second greatest commandment of loving others and living under God’s perfect provision and care they will each operate with their own interests in mind.

The secular principles of women’s liberation and feminism have begun. History is full of examples of the distortion of male dominance in relationships. This distortion and dominance is a result of the fall, and we cannot get our definition of the role of male headship from the world. Also, in today’s society some men are abdicating their role as head of the home and allowing their wives to take that position. Ladies, let’s encourage our husbands in their God-given role and not seek to step into their place.

God holds Adam accountable for The Fall because Adam’s headship was in place before The Fall (Romans 5:12-21). God later sends His Son as the “last Adam a life-giving spirit”.

Satan has set himself up against the knowledge of God and against any and everything that represents the glory of God. Satan is against God’s design for marriage, sexual intimacy within marriage, males and females, and family. If you and I agree with the idea that people have a right

to declare their own gender, despite biology, or declare themselves to be without gender we too are against God's design.

Satan has sought to destroy everything God has declared righteous and holy. The first family, soon, experiences this. Satan was told that there will be enmity between his seed and Eve's seed. His mission, ever since, has been to destroy her progeny, particularly males. Adam and Eve's firstborn son, Cain, murders their second born son, Abel. John tells us that, prior to the murder, Cain was of the evil one. And because Cain's deeds were evil and Abel's were righteous Cain killed Abel (1 Jn. 3:12). This is not the last occurrence, in biblical history, of someone attempting to kill God's elect: specifically, males in the line of Christ.

In Moses' day, Pharaoh ordered the murder of all Hebrew baby boys. This order was an attempt to prevent the Hebrews from multiplying and eventually conquering Egypt. Herod issued a similar command in the New Testament. He wanted baby boys killed to protect his throne.

People have desired autonomy (the quality or state of being self-governing; especially the right of self-government, self-directing freedom and especially moral independence) since the Garden. This desire became obvious in our country in the 1960s as the moral and sexual revolution came on the scene. The push for autonomy expresses the truth that fallen humans want to be independent of all authority. We desire to live apart from God. The world is rebelling against God's good design for His creation.

When speaking of the Defense of Marriage Act Justice Anthony Kennedy said that men and women who voted for the act were acting with "intent to harm". Judges Roberts and Scalia wrote opinions that said the majority court is painting those who support marriage as it has been defined for millennia as, "bigots", and "enemies of the human race" (2013-www.supremecourt.gov/opinions).

Christians need to be willing to declare that calling evil or wrong what God has called good is rebellion against God. *Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who substitute darkness for light and light for darkness; Who substitute bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter! Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes. And clever in their own sight!* (Isa. 5:20-21). Remember, we are talking about one's own perception of himself or herself. Is self-perception something someone must accept or can he or she resist the temptation to embrace an inaccurate self-perception?

When ideas are pushed, in many arenas, it can seem hard to resist the temptation to believe those ideas. Temptation is not always sinful; therefore, I don't want to imply that everyone is always responsible for the initial temptation to be someone they are not. Advertising is effective, and the more the idea of becoming someone you are not is celebrated the more people will want to do or try it. These desires often become enflamed much like putting gasoline on a fire.

When temptation comes from the outside it is not sinful. Desiring something that is inherently sinful, no matter how brief or intense the desire, is sin. If someone places a temptation before you and you resist the temptation you are not guilty of sin. Jesus was tempted by Satan yet He "knew no sin". When someone gives in to the temptation, he or she opens themselves up to new temptations that may be sinful. The enticement then comes from within. When someone is tempted then carried away and enticed by his own lust and chooses sin he is 100% responsible for what he did with the temptation.

If a young male is tempted to dress in his sister's clothing and turns down participating in a family outing by saying he needs to study for an exam but in reality, he plans to go in her room to put on her prom dress and high heels, he made provision for his flesh. He is, therefore, responsible for putting that temptation before himself. He needs to involve his parents or a mature male Christian by telling them of his struggle with this sin.

The person who thinks their gender is at odds with their body has a perception problem which is at odds with their DNA, against every cell in their body. This perception is at odds with God as Creator. They are responding to their body based on how they have learned to understand their body, which is not based on a biblical worldview. Tony Reinke writes, "*Chromosomes cannot be re-engineered, removed or scrubbed clean from the software of our bodies*" (desiringgod.org). You and I can prepare ourselves to tell someone they are wrong if their "perception" is at odds with their DNA. Our words should be bathed in the truth of the gospel and express the love, wisdom and goodness of God as Creator.

Our culture calls this type of thinking and acting, "liberty". There will be a good chance that those God brings in your life will believe they have the liberty to decide who and what they are. This mindset is expressed in an article that appeared in the Sun Sentinel. "*LGBT youngsters living in Boynton Beach are free to be themselves and love who they want to love without*

worrying about medical efforts to change them.” Boynton Beach (FL) Outlaws ‘Conversion’ Therapy on Minors, (Brooke Baitinger, Jan 6, 2017).

God, who defines liberty, said sexual liberty is found only between a husband and a wife. *It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore, keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery,* (Gal. 5:1) (see also John 8:31-36). In *Transforming Homosexuality*, Heath Lambert and Denny Burk speak to this truth, *“The only sex desire that glorifies God is that desire that is ordered to the covenant of marriage. When sexual desire or attraction fixes on any kind of non-marital erotic activity, it falls short of the glory of God and is, by definition sinful.”* But, so often, we think living apart from God’s design is freedom. This is how the Israelites thought during the time of the judges. *“In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes”*, (Jdgs. 21:25).

Do you and I make something right by thinking it is right? What if your friend told you of her plan to end her own life because she decided she had no reason to live? Your friend thinks it is right to kill herself. This is against the 6th commandment. *“There is a way that seems right to man yet in the end it leads to death”* (Prov. 16:25).

While in high school I decided to end my life because of a break up with my boyfriend. He started to date someone else then broke up with me. I arrived home from school, found some pills, took them and then laid on my bed thinking I would soon die. Not long after that I began to feel sick and scared. In fear, I went upstairs and told my aunt, who was the only other person at my house. My aunt got on the phone right away, and I was taken to the hospital. Thankfully, God spared my life. At the time, I did not believe in God but I did believe my identity was found in being that guy’s girlfriend. Without that relationship, I thought, there was no meaning to life. I lived life to my pleasure and when the pleasure stopped I thought I had no reason to be here. My aunt, however, disagreed with my conclusion and took action to get help for me. I am so grateful that she did not agree and simply stand by to see what would happen to me! We should respond in the same manner with the issue of gender identity. We don’t have to agree with the wrong conclusions of others in order to continue a relationship with them.

Terminology and Secular Worldviews

There are many terms being used for discussing gender identity. It is helpful to know these terms and to know how they have changed over the years. There seems to be a goal of removing any words that can be traced back to the Bible. This removal of biblical words is dangerous because it is harder to understand sin and the need of a Savior if this is not an offense against God. Also, as we change terms for that which lines up with Scripture it can seem harder to dispute. Take time to familiarize yourself with these terms so you know what is being said.

Gender binary is a term to describe that gender is assigned at birth and is strictly male or female, man or woman, masculine or feminine. As previously stated, God created male and female. According to *The Teaching Transgender Toolkit*, “gender binary is considered to be limiting and problematic for those who do not fit neatly into the either-or categories. The either-or categories are male or female” (teachingtransgender.com).

Another secular term used to replace biblical principles is cisgender. Cisgender describes a person whose gender identity matches the biological sex they were assigned at birth. I am considered cisgender, by the world, because I live as a woman and I am married to a man who lives as a man. One transwoman says, “Cisgender will be the substitute term for what might have previously been mislabeled as *natural*”. When the Supreme Court legalized gay marriage in America, Justice Anthony Kennedy announced, in his majority opinion, “the limitation of marriage to opposite-sex couples may have long *seemed natural* and just, but its inconsistency with the central meaning of the fundamental right to marry is now manifest” (Obergefell). Notice the wording, as if what God teaches in His Word is wrong and needs to be corrected. This is dangerous thinking.

This thinking forsakes God and His word and makes a dangerous exchange. Paul spoke of natural relations being exchanged by those contrary to nature (unnatural). “*For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the **natural** function for that which is **unnatural**, 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*” (Rom. 1:26-27). These natural relations were based on truth not on what *seemed* true. I will address other issues of redefining terms as it relates to transgenderism later.

The following definitions will help bring clarity to the text of this writing. In most cases, the terms will be defined both from a secular worldview and a biblical worldview.

Gender is defined, by the world, as a concept used to refer to social and cultural differences rather than biological differences.

The transgender movement makes a distinction between gender and sex; gender being an individual's self-understanding and sex being an individual's biological sex determined at birth. Remember, every one of us was born with a wrong self-perception and we have all, at some level, sought to find joy, fulfillment and security in something other than Christ. Keeping this in mind will help us speak to those who are confused about their identity.

The Human Rights Campaign Foundation exists to improve the lives of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) people by working to increase understanding and encourage the adoption of LGBTQ-inclusive policies and practices. According to the foundation gender identity is, *“how you experience yourself as male or female including how masculine or feminine a person feels.”* They go on to say, *“Gender identity is one’s internal, deeply felt sense of being girl/woman, boy/man, somewhere in between, or outside those categories,”*

Some advocates of the transgender movement are pushing to move beyond gender and some advocate the concept of “omnigender”- denying the reality of gender altogether.

When completing a Facebook profile there are 56 genders to choose from and up to 10, per person, can be chosen.

Recently, the Washington Free Beacon ran an article titled *“EPA: Gender is ‘Male, Female, and Blend of Both or Neither’ Agency continues, collecting info about employees’ sexual orientation.* According to the writer, the EPA said, *“Both sexual orientation and gender identity are part of our demographic makeup; we all have both a sexual orientation and a gender identity”* (Elizabeth Harrington, Nov. 30, 2016).

Sexual orientation is defined as a person's sexual identity in relation to the gender to which they are attracted. The idea of sexual orientation elevates self-representation and identity over God's purposes for His image bearers. This idea says all that a person does flows out of their sexual preference. In other words, everything about the person comes from their sexual preference

(orientation) or who they are sexually. Sexual orientation is a concept that is replacing the biblical word “flesh”. *“For the mind set on the flesh (insert sexual orientation) is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so, and those who are in the flesh cannot please God”* Romans 8:6-8.

God says we are to have our mind set on something. All people are made in the image of God and a believer’s life should be *oriented* toward something, in all that they do; God and His glory. As we interact with others our focus should be on the two main biblical categories of people; saved or lost. Our love for others should be oriented toward the spiritual condition of others first and foremost.

Terms like gender identity and sexual orientation sear the conscience and defend our fleshly desires because these secular terms focus on behavior rather than the heart.

Gender dysphoria: *“The diagnosis of Gender Dysphoria is given to people whose gender at birth is contrary to the one they identify with. These individuals see and feel themselves to be a different gender than their assigned gender. Gender dysphoria is manifested in a variety of ways, including strong desires to be treated as the other gender or to be rid of one’s sex characteristics, or a strong conviction that one has feelings and reactions typical of the other gender.”* (DSM-V: Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders published by the American Psychiatric Association , and offers a common language and standard criteria for the classification of mental disorders.) The critical element of gender dysphoria is the presence of clinically significant distress associated with the condition for six months or more.

Gender dysphoria was formerly called Gender Identity Disorder. For years advocates for the change have argued that terms like “Gender Identity Disorder” characterize all trans-people as mentally ill. Based on the standards to be set by the DSM-V, individuals displaying *“a marked incongruence between one’s experienced/expressed gender and assigned gender”* will be diagnosed with Gender Dysphoria.

Jack Drescher, a member of the American Psychological Association subcommittee working on the revision said, *“We know there is a whole community of people out there who are not seeking*

medical attention and live between the two binary categories. We wanted to send the message that the therapist's job isn't to pathologize."

It is important to note that according to the DSM-V, as many as 98% of gender confused boys and 88% of gender confused girls eventually accept their biological sex after naturally passing through puberty (Pg. 445).

Another "disorder" having to do with the body is BIID, also called amputee identity disorder. I mention it here to express the range of ideas that are now being accepted and given a diagnosis so treatment can be offered and paid for by a third party (insurance).

Body integrity identity disorder is defined as a psychological disorder in which an otherwise healthy individual feels that they are meant to be disabled. BIID is typically accompanied by the desire to amputate one or more healthy limbs. It also includes the desire for other forms of disability, as in the case of Jewel Shuping who, from a young age, dreamed of being blind. Jewel was born perfectly healthy, but she became so obsessed with losing her sight that at age 21, she took matters into her own hands. She found a sympathetic psychologist who poured drain cleaner into her eyes and after about 6 months she was blind.

These "disorders" are against the gospel and proclaim that a person can choose what to do with the good gift, of a body, that he or she received from God.

As the words confusion and disorder are removed from these ideas it is important to remember that God speaks of confusion and disorder in the Bible (Gen 11:1-9, Exodus 14:24, Josh. 10:10, 1 Cor. 14:33). As Moses communicated God's blessings for obeying God and curses the Israelites will experience if they do not obey He named confusion, madness, and bewilderment of heart among other things (Deut. 28:20-48). God makes it clear that confusion and disorder are part of living in a sin-cursed world and can be a result of personal sin choices. We are to respond to disorder and confusion God's way rather than following the ways of the world.

Speaking, through Isaiah, about men separated from Himself, God said, "*they trust in confusion and speak lies*" (Isa 59:4). James said, "*For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist there is disorder and every evil thing*" (James 3:16).

There is confusion in the world about this topic. Believers need not be confused because God speaks very clearly about His creation and purpose for man and woman. Using biblical language allows us to show others what God says about their ideas and preferences.

Rosaria Champagne Butterfield encourages her readers to use the same categories used by God in His Word. In her late 20s Rosaria adopted a lesbian identity. She, later, earned her Ph.D. then from 1992 thru 2002 served in the English department and Women Studies Program at Syracuse University. Her primary academic field was critical theory, specializing in queer theory. She advised the LGBT student group, wrote Syracuse University's policy for same-sex couples, and actively lobbied for LGBT aims. Rosaria is now a Christ follower who has repented of her sins, including homosexuality. She is a wife, mother and author. In her book, *Openness Unhindered*, she writes, *"Everyone loses when we define ourselves using categories that God does not"*. *"Because I am a new creature in Christ, my identity, and the words I use to reflect that, must honor the primacy of Christ indwelling my life"*.

Dr. Paul R. McHugh, former psychiatrist in chief at Johns Hopkins Hospital, has written several articles on treating those with gender identity confusion and congenital anomalies. He was instrumental in the decision made at Johns Hopkins Hospital to stop doing sex reassignment surgery. According to him, the transgendered argument holds that: *"one's feeling of 'gender' is a conscious, subjective sense that, being in one's mind, cannot be questioned by others. The individual often seeks not just society's tolerance of this "personal truth" but affirmation of it"* (Wall street Journal May 13, 2016).

Causal Secular Theories and Treatments

At this point, it is important to acknowledge the unusual case of congenital anomalies, known as disorders of sex development (DSD), that occur in utero. The occurrence of these anomalies is approximately 1 in 2000 births. It is equally important to note that most people who say they are "in the wrong body" are not in the DSD category.

A Brown University study was conducted to do extensive review of the medical literature from 1955 to 1998 and was aimed at producing numeric estimates for the frequency of sex variations (DSD). They identified 15 variations that were identified in anywhere from 1 in 770 to 1 in 150,000 births.

Congenital anomalies (DSD) remind us that the consequences of The Fall can impact genetic chromosomal structure. God is sovereign over this impact. Those with any variation of normal anatomical structures should be treated as God’s image bearers. Parents of babies born with congenital anomalies have difficult decisions to make. Pediatric genetic specialists and endocrinologists can order tests and offer medical wisdom. I want to mention that Jesus spoke of eunuchs, which I will discuss further a bit later, the point I want to make here is that this is not a modern-day condition (Mt. 19:12). In fact, Isaiah spoke words of hope to eunuchs who keep the Lord’s sabbaths and choose what pleases God. These eunuchs will receive a memorial and an everlasting name from the Lord which will never be cut off (Isa. 56:3-5). Our loving Father offers hope for those with what is now called disorder of sex development, when they please Him. The implication is that pleasing God is something they are capable of doing, in Christ, without altering their anatomy.

The American College of Pediatrics issued a statement about the harmful effects of gender ideology on children. The following is their statement regarding disorders of sex development. *“Human sexuality is an objective biological binary trait: “XY” and “XX” are genetic markers of male and female, respectively – not genetic markers of a disorder. The norm for human design is to be conceived either male or female. Human sexuality is binary by design with the obvious purpose being the reproduction and flourishing of our species. This principle is self-evident. The exceedingly rare disorders of sex development (DSDs), including but not limited to testicular feminization and congenital adrenal hyperplasia, are all medically identifiable deviations from the sexual binary norm, and are rightly recognized as disorders of human design. Individuals with DSDs (also referred to as “intersex”) do not constitute a third sex”* (Gender Ideology Harms Children, www.ACPeds.org).

The medical and psychological community are conducting studies aimed at identifying the origin of transgenderism. Conclusions from these studies have been reported along with suggestions for “treatment”.

Brain sex theory is one such reported conclusion. This theory is based on the idea that two distinct processes occur during the development of a baby in utero, but not at the same time. Sex differentiation of the genitals and sex differentiation of the brain take place at different stages of development. This is a theory. Mark Yarhouse discusses the limitations of this theory in his

book, *Understanding Gender Dysphoria*. One limit he notes is “small sample sizes” “*The most influential studies in this area reported on findings of the neuroanatomical brain regions of 6 male-to-female transsexuals and 7 female-to-male transsexuals*” (pg. 72). He also notes that, frequently, participants in the study were actively involved in cross-sex-type behavior and some were utilizing feminizing hormone therapy.

Consideration of these types of studies and research require capturing our thoughts and viewing the conclusions with a biblical worldview. We should think based on what God has revealed in His Word about the body and the soul or spirit. God said, “watch over our heart with all diligence for from it flow the springs of life” (Prov. 4:23). The center of decision-making is one’s immaterial heart (inner man) not the material brain (outer man) (Heb. 4:12, Mt. 10:28, 15:19, 16:26). The cells in my brain do not come up with ideas. Kevin N. Carson D.Min. explains this, “The brain essentially mediates the heart. The heart expresses itself through the body. The brain does not initiate moral action or behavior” (ACBC Annual Conference, 2017) Jesus gives us hope when He tells us our ideas and thinking come from our heart. Jesus came to earth, died then rose again so that in Christ our hearts could change.

In his book, *We Cannot Be Silent*, Dr. Al Mohler states, “*Moreover, we must understand that the argument that says the brain is wired differently than the body does not justify reason for sex reassignment surgery or the transgender option. Rather, it testifies to the brokenness of creation and its effects on human sin.*”

God tells us not to conform to the pattern of this world BUT be transformed by the renewing of our minds so that we can test and approve what His will is, His good pleasing and perfect will. If we look for justification for our sin or the sin of others we stand in opposition to the gospel. We cannot allow a biological argument to distract us from the truth. The world uses biological arguments to advocate for ending life in the womb, approving sin outside of the womb, and ending life with the assistance of a doctor if life is deemed no longer worth living. If we argue the ending of life in the womb yet celebrate the idea that a person has a right, outside of the womb, to do what he or she pleases with his or her body, we contradict ourselves, and our argument and testimony weakens. God is our Creator, and He has knit us together in the way He pleases. His pleasure and our good are never at odds.

When God told Moses to go speak to Pharaoh, Moses argued. One of his arguments had to do with his slow speech and tongue. God said He made Moses' mouth and He would be with Moses' mouth (Ex. 4:10-12). Paul also admits to a weakness, a thorn in the flesh, but he realizes that God's power is made perfect in his weakness. He viewed the weakness, that God left in place, as a source of grace and a way to acknowledge God's perfect power in him.

Believers need not be ignorant of the root cause of disorder because God, in His grace and mercy tells us: *just as through one-man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned* (Romans 5:12, Jer. 17:9-10). We live in a fallen world which results in thoughts and ideas rooted in futility and selfishness. If gender identity confusion is biological, part of DNA, there is no hope for change. Another reality is that when a person decides they are "in the wrong body", one treatment, that I did not find documented, is giving more of the hormone that compliments the God given sex.

This is not like cancer which can be detected with medical testing, treated and monitored. This is a war, not against a set of chromosomes and a brain, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. This is a heart and mind problem which is "treated" with the gospel.

Psychosocial factors are also considered, by the world, a potential cause of gender identity confusion. Proponents of this idea believe that psychosocial environment plays a role in this. This theory indicates that parents and observational learning play a role in a person's idea about gender. What is witnessed, reinforced and modeled by parents, other family members and peers give a child their sense of gender and associated behaviors.

Certainly, influence is part of the fabric of God's creation. In fact, we are told to be influencers and imitators of God and Christ (Eph. 5:1-2, Phil. 2:5). Scripture contains many examples of influence people had on others for both righteousness and unrighteousness. However, our environment is not the cause of our choices. Jesus said our heart is the source of our choices (Mt. 15:19, 1 Cor. 15:33, 1 Peter 1:14-18, 2 Tim 1:5, Prov. 12:26, 13:20, 22:24-25).

The Old Testament stories of Joseph and Moses teach that what is witnessed, reinforced and modeled is not determinative in a person's life. Moses' choice to consider his options is found in the book of Hebrews. *"By, faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of*

Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to endure ill treatment with the people of God rather than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, considering the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he was looking to the reward" (11:24-26).

Some doctors advocate waiting to intervene with treatment. In 2011 the Karolinska Institute in Sweden reported findings of a long-term study of transgenderism. For up to 30 years they followed 324 people who had sex-reassignment surgery. About 10 years after surgery the transgendered began to experience increasing mental difficulties. Their suicide mortality rose almost 20-fold above the comparable non-transgendered population.

Transitioning to another gender is a process that can involve psychotherapy and hormone treatments taken while living as a member of his or her preferred gender. Pre-pubertal children are offered puberty blockers while they consider which gender they will choose. According to the American College of Pediatrics, children who take these puberty blockers “will never be able to conceive any genetically related children even via artificial reproductive technology.” They also add that “cross-sex hormones (testosterone and estrogen) are associated with dangerous health risks including but not limited to cardiac disease, high blood pressure, blood clots, stroke, diabetes and cancer” (www.ACPeds.org).

Some people decide on more radical changes using surgery. These surgeries can include vocal-cord modifications, breast implants and mastectomies, and modifications of sexual organs. This procedure, formerly known as gender reassignment surgery is now termed gender confirmation surgery. Hopefully, you can identify the vocabulary changes which seek to remove the truth of the Creator, who assigns our biological sex, in this new terminology. In an Associated Press article titled *The Associated Press and the Pronoun Wars*, Oct. 18, 2017, the writer states “*Caitlyn Jenner was always Caitlyn Jenner. The operation merely confirmed this ontological fact.*”

Some female to male transgenders leave their reproductive systems intact in the hopes of giving birth at some point. Currently, the Boston LGBT health center, Fenway Health, sees more than 2,000 trans people in their clinic. When speaking of a trans-male giving birth, midwife, Clare Stork is reported as saying, “*If physiologically your body can do this, and you're comfortable with the process and still want to present as a man, you can. And that's awesome.*” Currently, most doctors in the US will not do surgery on those under 18. However, in January 2017,

National Geographic featured at least two teens who underwent some form of gender “confirmation” surgery.

In an article from the Washington Post, titled, *D.C. health insurers now required to cover transgender therapies, including surgeries*, (Mike DeBonis. Feb. 27, 2014), the idea of a medical necessity for transgender therapies is quite evident. An extensive portion of the article is included below in an effort to demonstrate the impact of using the words “medically necessary” for elective surgery.

*The order issued by city insurance regulators makes explicit that denying coverage for any **medically necessary** treatment “designed to alter an individual’s physical characteristics to those of the opposite sex” would violate already-existing city laws against discriminating on the basis of “gender identity or expression.” It also makes clear that gender dysphoria, formerly known as gender identity disorder, is a recognized medical condition and those diagnosed with it are “entitled to receive **medically necessary** benefits and services,” as defined by the World Professional Association for Transgender Health.*

*With the new policy, the District joins Connecticut, Vermont, California, Colorado and Oregon in explicitly requiring insurers to cover **medically necessary** procedures and therapies for transgender policyholders.*

*“These residents should not have to pay exorbitant out-of-pocket expenses for **medically necessary** treatment when those without gender dysphoria do not,” he said.*

D.C. residents have seen frequent issues getting their insurers to cover these kinds of treatments and procedures. Many of the denials involved surgeries, but others involved more basic procedures — such as breast cancer screening and gynecological exams for persons undergoing hormone therapy to transition from female to male. (emphasis added)

When we begin to use the words medically necessary for elective surgery we make the idea harder to resist and put a responsibility of payment on health insurance companies, which seems to be part of the point of the requirement in D.C.

Dr. Paul McHugh explains the reason for ceasing to offer sex-reassignment surgery at John Hopkins. “*We at Johns Hopkins University—which in the 1960s was the first American medical*

center to venture into "sex-reassignment surgery"—launched a study in the 1970s comparing the outcomes of transgendered people who had the surgery with the outcomes of those who did not. Most of the surgically treated patients described themselves as "satisfied" by the results, but their subsequent psycho-social adjustments were no better than those who didn't have the surgery. And so, at Hopkins we stopped doing sex-reassignment surgery, since producing a "satisfied" but still troubled patient seemed an inadequate reason for surgically amputating normal organs." <http://www.wsj.com/articles/paul-mchugh-transgender-surgery-isnt-the-solution-1402615120>

The sad news is that in October of 2016, Johns Hopkins University declared that after forty years they will “resume gender-affirming” surgeries. This decision came after increasing scrutiny on the institution. The Human Rights Campaign and other LGBT advocates called upon Johns Hopkins to disavow, a “special report” McHugh co-authored with Lawrence Mayer, and abandon the legacy established by McHugh’s leadership. The report, in question, is titled, *The Sexuality and Gender Special Report*.

In ancient times, it was common practice for rulers to castrate some of their servants and/or advisers in order to subdue and pacify them. It was especially common to castrate men who tended the royal harem. Men were made eunuchs for the distinct purpose of being controlled by another. As stated earlier, Jesus speaks of eunuchs who were born that way, and those who were made that way either by others or by their own choice. God sent Philip to share the gospel with an Ethiopian, who was a eunuch, and he was saved (Mt. 19:12, Acts 8:26-29). Those who are confused about their gender end up being controlled by the concept of gender. They begin to make choices focused on that idea. Many of these choices will impact the rest of their lives. Christians, as ambassadors of Christ, have the incredible privilege of holding out the word of truth that will set them free.

Altering a body with hormone therapy or mutilating a body with elective surgery, to meet a sinful desire, is rebellion against God the Creator. This choice attempts to use the body to serve the person in order to get their idol. On Mt. Carmel, the prophets of Baal called on their god to send fire from heaven, but he did not respond. They proceeded to leap about, cry out in a loud voice and then cut themselves with swords and lances until blood gushed out of them. This was in an effort to manipulate their “god” into meeting their desire. Cutting of the body was a pagan

practice in the ancient world. It was done to rouse a god's pity in order to make the god respond to their request or desire.

Mutilating the body assumes the body belongs to the mutilator, or the one deciding to have their own body mutilated, and indicates they have the "right" to do with it what they want. This is making one's self (one's body) an idol which violates the 1st and 2nd commandments. The fact that these "treatments" are offered does not make them right in the eyes of the Lord, and in fact many who have had these procedures are still "troubled" and discontent (Gal 2:20, Rom. 6:11-14, 1 Cor. 6:19-20, Lev. 19:28).

Doctors and surgeons are offering various treatments to patients who would like to live as a gender different than their God-assigned sex. God says He is the Creator, and we do not have a right to decide who and what we are. *Then the word of the Lord came to me saying, "Can I not, O house of Israel, deal with you as this potter does?" declares the Lord. "Behold, like the clay in the potter's hand, so are you in My hand, O house of Israel" (Jer. 18:5-6). "Woe to the one who quarrels with his Maker—an earthenware vessel among the vessels of earth! Will the clay say to the potter, 'What are you doing?' Or the thing you are making say, 'He has no hands?'" (Isa. 45:9).*

When speaking of sex-reassignment, Dr. Paul McHugh said, *"I have witnessed a great deal of damage from sex-reassignment. The children (born with gender anomalies) transformed from their male constitution into female roles suffered prolonged distress and misery as they sensed their natural attitudes. Their parents usually lived with guilt over their decisions—second-guessing themselves and somewhat ashamed of the fabrication, both surgical and social, they had imposed on their sons. As for the adults who came to us claiming to have discovered their "true" sexual identity and to have heard about sex-change operations, we psychiatrists have been distracted from studying the causes and natures of their mental misdirections by preparing them for surgery and for a life in the other sex. We have wasted scientific and technical resources and damaged our professional credibility by collaborating with madness rather than trying to study, cure, and ultimately prevent it."*

<https://www.firstthings.com/article/2004/11/surgical-sex>

Popular cultural opinion, as you can tell from the laws, articles, medical research and treatments, is moving far from God's Word. This movement has permeated all aspects of our society. Even

some Christians allow for some expressions of “freedom” in this area. In his book, Mark Yarhouse allows for medical treatment and intervention in some people even minors. These treatments reject what God says about Himself as Creator.

God references Himself as Creator over two hundred times after the third chapter of Genesis. Without a commitment to stand firm on a biblical understanding of what God has been doing in His creation since before the foundations of the earth, we cannot speak to the issue of gender identity confusion or any other aspect of the LGBT agenda. We now turn our attention to the biblical view of gender confusion as it relates to idolatry.

Idolatry

Nine-year-old, Tomee War Bonnett said, *“The worst thing about being a girl is that you just can’t do things that boys can do,”* (National Geographic, Dec. 2016). Those who want to be known as a gender other than their God-given sex are idolizing their body. They are attempting to meet a desire through a means other than God Himself which is a form of coveting; a desire for more than God has given. Coveting a different body indicates an entitlement view of life. This view says, “I should have what I want”. They are making a dangerous “exchange” by using their body to get something.

God, speaking through Jeremiah, told Israel they had committed two sins; they turned from God toward cisterns that do not profit them. They rejected Him and chased an idol; the dangerous exchange. *“Has a nation changed gods when they were not gods? But My people have changed their glory for that which does not profit. “Be appalled, O heavens, at this, and shudder, be very desolate,” declares the LORD. “For My people have committed two evils: They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, to hew for themselves cisterns, broken cisterns that can hold no water”* (Jer. 2:11-13). In futility, we try to satisfy our heart’s desires with idols instead of believing God is enough.

Idolatry always starts in the heart. Idols of the heart are any thoughts (concepts, ideas, and perceptions), desires, and expectations we worship or pursue in place of the true God. We forsake God and chase after created things that hold no water. By nature, our hearts are selfish. We want what we want, and we do not want anyone, even God, setting limits on our lives. These things become what we think we must have for life to be meaningful or happy. The desire may be comfort, pleasure, love meaning or significance, just to name a few.

Body idolatry opposes the truth that God is enough and that God supplies all our needs in Christ Jesus (Ps. 90:14, Gal 4:19, Rom. 8:32). After David committed adultery with Bathsheba, he was confronted by the prophet Nathan who said, “*It is I (God) who anointed you king over Israel and it is I who delivered you from the hand of Saul. I also gave you your master’s house and your master’s wives into your care, and I gave you the house of Israel and Judah; and if that had been too little, I would have added to you many more things like these! Why have you despised the word of the LORD by doing evil in His sight?*” (2 Sam. 12:7-9). God is making the point that He had provided enough for David to live for God’s glory and if it was not enough He would have provided more. Notice, God did not ask David if it was enough. He makes the point that it was enough. David was not to go after something God had not provided.

We are not simply speaking about the name or pronoun a person chooses or the clothing they wear. Adam and Eve tried to cover their sin with fig leaves. They thought they could fix their problem with an outward change. But God clothed them with the skin of an animal, which represented the Lord Jesus Christ. Joel records God’s call to Israel to return to Him with all their heart by saying, “rend your heart and not your garments” (2:12-13). We can teach our believing friends who are confused about their gender to get dressed by putting on “*the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts*” (Romans 13:14). We can show them what God says about their desires.

We are speaking about a heart problem, and unless we help them to discern what they are choosing over God, the fountain of living water, they will turn to another idol. We need to help people identify the reason they chose this sin. After identifying the desire, a person will grow in his or her understanding of the desire by knowing what he/she believes those desires will do for them. Below is a list of possible desires, which is by no means exhaustive, and sample questions to ask to help get to the root of their desire.

Possible desires:

- Acceptance and friendships found in a group of people instead of going to God through Christ
- satisfaction from their body instead of true satisfaction in Christ alone
- peace from changing something about their body rather than real peace with God

- joy by changing their body rather than true joy that comes from faith in Christ's sacrifice for sin
- attention instead of placing faith in Christ for full attention and approval of God based on Christ's righteousness received at the time of salvation

Questions to ask:

- What do you love about your body? Hate about your body? Describe your idea of a perfect body.
- What would a different body do for you?
- What do you think you need?
- What defines success or failure for you?
- When have you struggled with jealousy or bitterness?
- In what situations do you get sad or depressed?
- What rights do you think you should have that you don't currently have?
- Where do you believe that God has let you down?

At first, any of these desires could bring some semblance of peace, satisfaction or joy, if obtained, but in the end, they are futile pursuits. If the idolatry is not identified, and repented of, a person may turn from transgenderism to another life dominating sin. People who are hurting and confused about who they are and why they are here are offered broken cisterns that do not hold water. Broken cisterns come in the form of treatment offered by doctors and surgeons. The treatments end up encouraging the pursuit of the idol.

When speaking of gender reassignment surgery Dr. Al Mohler said, *"The church must also respond to the transgender movement by rejecting both the reality and the morality of gender reassignment surgery. Though we certainly must sympathize with the personal anguish and confusion that causes any individual to seek such a drastic and surgical option, we cannot accept that a surgical procedure can actually change a man into a woman or a woman into a man."* *"To amputate and cosmetically reform the body in this sense is an act of defiance against the Creator's purpose"* (We Cannot Be Silent, pg. 82).

Hope and Help for the Gender confused

Transgenderism, homosexuality, and sexual immorality are not new sins but these sinful lifestyles are more and more “in the light” or in public view. These life choices are being championed as good and right. Not long ago, these choices were made in the “dark”. Not long after I graduated high school I learned that I was pregnant. Pregnancy was not included in my after-graduation plans. I was going to college. The worst part was that my “secret” choices were about to be made known. My body would soon declare my sin. I will share more of this story in a bit.

God is allowing us to know what others are choosing and struggling with through the normalization of our topic. God said the harvest is plentiful and the workers are few. Will we join in the work? It is a privilege to be used by God to speak truth to others and to love them with the love of Christ. Use the Scriptures for their intended purpose, “*whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope*” (Rom. 15:4). My hope is that you will not shrink back from the topic of transgenderism but learn from God and remember He has equipped you, with His Word, for every good work.

As God allows you to have conversations with others about this, you will need to know, as far as you are able, whether you are speaking to a believer or an unbeliever. Perhaps you are speaking to a believer who has heard lies from the world and is uncertain of what God says. Start with Creation as presented earlier.

Our unbelieving friend needs to hear the gospel and receive the free gift of salvation before they can live in a way that honors God. We can tell them why their choice to live contrary to their God-given sex is wrong and seek to help them make different choices while keeping in mind that their greatest need is not behavior modification but salvation. We need to take care to avoid the impression that if they would simply accept their birth sex their life will have meaning and they will be satisfied.

Truth found in 1 Cor. 10:13 applies to our friends and family who are struggling with confusion about their gender. “*No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.*” One

person, born female, who calls “himself” gender dysphoric says, “*Personally I don’t like the word “disorder” that much. I prefer ‘special’ or ‘unique’ because that is what I believe transgender is.*” Is gender identity confusion special or unique? According to Scripture, this issue is “common” not unique.

It is popular in our culture to speak about many issues as falling outside of the biblical category of “common to man”. It takes the practice of discernment to recognize and understand that a person, who is confused about their gender, is not struggling with something outside of the “common to man” category. This person faces temptation just like others, and their heart is full of lust (1Jn. 2:16). Only in the context of this truth can hope-filled counsel be offered. We cannot allow the nature of the sin derail our conclusions and let them fall outside of biblical boundaries. It helps no one to give sinners the impression that their sin is not sin.

What a privilege to offer them the hope of our faithful God’s provision of a way of escape, to stand under the temptation. Biological arguments are eliminated by the truth of this passage. In a sin-cursed world people suffer with diseases, congenital anomalies and sickness. These organic “abnormalities” can make it harder for us to resist the temptation to sin but are never an excuse for sin.

Compassionate care listens to the person who is struggling and enters their life in order to seek to understand their ideas and beliefs as much as possible. Jesus is the perfect example of compassionate care. Compassionate care does not deny or discount the struggle and temptation but does offer the hope of freedom in Christ.

True lasting hope and comfort come only from God in His Word. When addressing the Corinthians, Paul spoke of a number of sins, for which Jesus died, in the past tense. “*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 homosexual, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God. 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*” (1Cor. 6:9-11). Many of these sins are now called normal and right in our culture. Many people advocate for a “right” to enjoy these sins. Yet if they are acknowledged as sin and repented of there is a “BUT God” moment. Calling sin, a sin offers hope. Believers should not desire to engage in old ways of living because this is not

who they are. They have been made new in Christ; *“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come”* (2 Cor.5:17).

God’s grace is powerful. He can take someone separated from Him and make him or her alive in Christ. Paul encouraged the Corinthians to remember they are no longer what they once were but now are washed, sanctified, and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. These truths have brought me much hope when I have had opportunity to share my testimony. At times, I am tempted to fear what others may think when I tell of being pregnant as a teenager or that I attempted suicide. “Such were some of you” describes me and I have been washed, sanctified and justified in Christ. I need not be ashamed because God sees me as a new creation. Believers are not to be ashamed of the gospel for it is the power of God for salvation. The power of the gospel is more powerful than our sinful desires and choices. What a hope we have to offer. In Christ, God offers new meaning to life which can lead to new desires.

One day, while in my room I heard a commotion outside my window. As I looked out, I saw my son’s friend and our dog standing in the yard. The friend was looking up at the roof of our porch. As I turned my head I saw my 4 year old son on the roof of our porch. He had climbed the rope swing to get to the roof ledge then climbed on to the roof. At the point, my husband and I began to use the words, “just because you can does not mean you should”.

Most of what is being said about the LGBT agenda and the sexual revolution is about exalting self and the feelings of the individual. Gender confusion is self-centered. Talk to those God brings in your life about Jesus who being in the very nature God did not consider equality with God something to be grasped but made Himself nothing (Phil. 2:3-8). God calls believers to live lives focused on loving Him and others, not ourselves. Simply because there is allowance and technology available to make a vain attempt at crossing over to another gender (which is not biologically possible) by mutilating the body does not mean we should do it or approve of it. Our attitude is to be the same as Christ Jesus.

Speaking truth is loving and should be done in love. As you prayerfully consider God’s truth about transgenderism ask Him to give you opportunity to share the truth. The more you say it, the more you will grow in your understanding. I also want to encourage you to ask God to allow you to know people who are confused about their gender and what God says about it. As He answers those prayers, you can practice acts of love as well.

Love is displayed in deeds and truth (1 Jn. 3:18). Here are some practical ways to display love to your neighbor who claims transgenderism. The following acts of love can be applied to a believer or an unbeliever, although, they will look different depending on the spiritual status of the individual.

Be a friend, a real friend and do not make changing them a condition for your friendship (Jn. 15:12-13, Pro. 17:17). This is a relationship not a project. Consider the words that come to your mind when someone mentions this person's name. Do your thoughts include: made in the image of God, believer, or transgender? Is your focus on who they are or what they do? I do need to add here that in a counseling setting we cannot promise to continue to stick with them if they are unwilling to repent. Do not continue to counsel those who are unrepentant. But, lovingly tell them the way of the transgressor is hard.

Listen and be open to learning, about their journey, from them (Prov. 18:13). Don't assume you know what they are going through. Listen first. Listening allows you to hear their world-view and the ways in which they came to their conclusions (Ja. 1:19-20, Mt. 9:36-37).

Remember, gender identity is defined (by the LGBT community) as how you experience (think about) yourself as male or female. Some say this concept can change over time. This is referred to as gender fluidity. This thinking can make it hard for someone to hear anything but what he or she has decided to believe. It is a waste of time to argue about what they think about their body. As you have opportunity to speak truth, stick to the point of offering the truth and hope of the gospel. Arguing leads to division, whereas, avoiding those arguments can make a way for you to speak truth in the life of someone who is confused.

If your nephew announces that he is a she you will need to disagree with him because he is wrong. While you disagree and share truth you need to resist the temptation to convince him of the truth. You may be tempted to go back and forth with him in a no, yes, no, yes type of exchange. Stick to the truth of Scripture which includes him being made by God in the image of God. Tell him that God gave him the good gift of a male body. You can disagree with him without the goal of "winning the battle". You can plant and water a seed but it is God who causes the growth in his heart. Your goal is to honor God and accurately represent Him and His truth. If you have sought to do that you can walk away with peace and hope.

Ask God to help you remember a time you were distressed or alienated from someone so you can express compassion as you speak with a person who is confused or questioning gender. They may be distressed and somewhat alienated. One trans-man said he believes he would have killed himself during the early months of his pregnancy if he hadn't found friends through a Facebook group called Birthing or Chestfeeding Trans People and Allies. He is quoted as saying, "*My online friends were the only people who got me*" (Time, Sept. 12, 2016). I well remember when I was pregnant as a teen. I wanted to hide because my body was changing. This was a particularly dark time in my life. I pulled away from friendships and spent a lot of time alone. Eventually, I gave birth to a son and gave him for adoption. There are no words to describe this time in my life but I am confident God can use it to help me understand a bit of what others may be experiencing as they battle thoughts of discontentment with their body. What if a male dressed as a female walked in to your youth group, office, or church? How would you receive them? Would they leave knowing they are welcome to return? Would you offer to sit with them? This is not an attempt at agreeing with their choice but an attempt at relating (building involvement) in order to offer truth and love.

Share the Gospel. Our Creator loves sinners. This is the only real hope you can offer. Those who struggle with gender identity confusion struggle with who he or she is and where he or she fits in society. People want to define themselves, and they want community. Both community and true identity are available, in Christ. Tell your friend how God identifies His people in His Word and how He offers community in His church. The very things they are seeking are important to God and available through Jesus. They are simply looking in the wrong places and exchanging truth for lies. The offer of identity and community through gender fluidity is being advertised, pushed and taught. Companies spend lots of money each year on advertising because it works. Put something in front of someone long enough and they most likely will decide they cannot be fulfilled without it. Believers should be walking billboards of hope, advertising the free gift of salvation through Jesus. Most likely, this will take time and a long-term commitment to the relationship with multiple exposures to the gospel. This will involve getting in the trench with another person.

Speak the truth with concern and in love (Eph. 4:15). Warn them of the danger and the fraudulent promises offered in this choice. Tell them of the regret of those who have made this choice (www.sexchangeregret.com). Be a witness and wait patiently on the Lord.

Be candid about differences in the way each of you understand the issue. A true friend will find a way to communicate differences that matter (Prov. 27:6). You don't have to agree with a person to be their friend. Do not rejoice in a person's decision to reject God's design. Would you rejoice if your friend's parent was a thief? Communicate a desire to love with the love of Christ, not love as they define it. Call your friend to repentance. He is removing himself from the safety of reality. If a friend or relative wants you to call him or her something other than what God calls that person or use a pronoun that does not match his or her biological sex, lovingly say that God does not see him as her or her as him. That person is asking you to bear false witness against a neighbor. I realize this comes with relational risk and we can trust God with the results. Let your friend know you want to preserve the relationship but if that does not happen, remember he or she is not rejecting you. Using Bible words when speaking truth allows for others to find the truth, for themselves, in the Bible.

Stand with the oppressed by opposing and condemning bullying and abuse (Prov. 1:10-16). Do not join in laughter, gossip, name-calling. Help those around you who are laughing to understand their own sin is no less hated by God than those they are mocking.

Receive your new brothers and sisters. Some will repent and should be welcomed as full members of the body of Christ with a new identity in Christ. Rosaria Butterfield expressed concern over whether or not she would be accepted as a new believer after she had turned from a lesbian lifestyle. In fact, while standing in a kitchen with a sister in Christ she was asked, by the other woman, if it was "safe" for them to be alone in the kitchen. Salvation by grace through faith changes people and words like this can bring doubt, about this truth, to new believers.

Strengthen your brothers and sisters. Some will have complete deliverance, and some will continue to struggle. God provided you as a friend. Disciple them and help them connect to the body of Christ (Heb. 3:13).

Pray. The devil wants to destroy. Jesus wants to save. Pray that your faith may not fail in this journey.

(Adapted from Loving Our Transgender Neighbors, ACBC Annual Preconference 2015, Denny Burk)

We can offer pre-counsel similar to premarital counsel which if followed can equip the hearer to avoid sin or help them instruct others in order to avoid sin. What follows are a few ways to pre-counsel in order to avoid transgenderism and other habitual sins. Parents, often, do this type of counsel with their children.

Parenting is a great privilege and parents have an incredible opportunity to help shape the worldview of their child. With that in mind, be biblical parents and tell your kids how to live. Don't let the lust of their flesh and eyes rule their lives or yours. A friend once told me, "*What our generation tolerates, our children's generation will embrace*". Kids are great at pretend play. In our home, we taught the difference between pretend and truth. In fact, with one of our kids we asked them to begin their stories with "this is a not true story" if they were making something up because their stories were spoken with such passion they were easy to believe even if not true.

Paul told Timothy of the difficult times to come, disobedience to parents is part of those difficult times (2 Tim 3:2). As part of the judgment on Judah God said He would make mere lads princes, and capricious children will rule over His people. He also said the youth will storm against the elder (Isa. 3:4-5). What can a parent do to help their kids avoid these wrong choices with painful consequences? God warns us of what not to do in Proverbs. "*Train up a child in the way he should go, even when he is old he will not depart from it*" (22:6). God says that if we allow our children to go toward their bent, sin, there is a good chance they will still be going that way when they are old. Steer them away from living to their own pleasure and, if they profess Christ, living for the glory of God.

Teach the practice of disciplining one's self for godliness. Teach kids to practice saying "no" to self. Ask them to practice saying "no" to something on occasion. Teach them to put off selfish ambitions and put on preferring others (1 Tim. 4:7, Lk. 9:23, Phil 2:3-4). Exemplify this yourself so they can learn from you.

Teach thankfulness, first by being thankful then by asking them to express thanks regularly. You can teach your child to say thank you but you cannot make them thankful. One way to grow a

thankful heart is by saying thank you. These words acknowledge something that someone did for or said to another. Complaining, lack of gratitude, impatience and sinful anger all proclaim that God is not good and that He has made a mistake. Do not allow your kids to complain and grumble. Life in a sin-cursed world is hard but God is good all the time. Let your kids hear you express this truth and help them to put on words that praise Him in the midst of hardship. Giving in to their desires or trying to make everything “better” for them does not teach them to depend on God for their satisfaction. In fact, it can teach them to worship the created over the Creator.

Thank God for making your children a male or a female and help them to be thankful for God’s perfect design of their body. God does not give bad gifts. Thankfulness wards off discontentment. Be thankful to a good God. Teach your children about their Creator. Solomon said, *“Remember also your Creator in the days of your youth, before the evil days come and the years draw near when you will say, “I have no delight in them”* (Ecc. 12:1). Tell them what God says about forming them and ordaining their days. The more time we spend remembering God’s goodness and perfect plan and purpose for our lives the less time we will spend looking for something else (Ps. 139:13-16, Jer. 1:5, Gal.1:15, Lk. 1:15, 39-44).

If your child or a child you are teaching or counseling is in Christ, talk with them often about their incredible privilege of representing Jesus to a dark world (Mt. 5:14-16, 2 Cor. 5:20, Phil 2:14-16). Teach them the primary goal of every believer; glorifying God (2 Cor. 5:9, 1 Cor. 10:31).

Trans is the Latin word, across. Transgender is to cross gender. This choice is an empty cistern. God tells us He *transforms* His children in to the image of Christ. The idea of transgender is a twisting of the gospel and places the focus on an outward change rather than an inner transformation from the indwelling Holy Spirit which is available in Christ. Transgender falls short of the glory of God but, God receives glory when His children are transformed into the image of His Son.

Give a “crossover” assignment to your friend or counselee. Ask them to meditate on Ephesians chapters 1-3 and make a list of the “former” and “now” truths of a believer. Truths such as; formerly separated from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, strangers to the covenants of promise without hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus, you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ (Eph. 2:11-14).

In an age of technology, it is important to monitor time and content of electronic usage. It is easy to become enslaved to the virtual world and form a habit of escaping into a world that can be controlled. The convenience of electronic entertainment is part of the growing problem of desiring to be someone else. This breeds discontentment with reality and with identity and it encourages the practice of focusing thoughts on the desire of the flesh. Require your kids to live in the real world for most of their waking hours. Challenge others and yourself to do the same. Spend time learning, and teaching others, about Jesus, the gospel and living out the two greatest commandments in the community God has placed you (1 Cor. 6:12, 9:24-27, 1 Tim. 4:7).

The tongue has the power of life and death, and words matter. Therefore, use language that promotes biblical truth not autonomy. Statements such as “you can be whatever you want to be” or “what do you want to be when you are grown?” and “when you leave this house you can do what you want but while you live here you live by our rules” are not biblically accurate. When discussing a person’s future use words that encourage them to remember that God has a plan and purpose for them. He has given them talents and abilities. Ask, “what passions and interests has God given you?”. Tell them what you observe and, in their presence, thank God for those abilities. When I was young, I wanted to be a famous singer. I am not a famous singer, nor do I have what is necessary to be a famous singer. No matter how badly I wanted that I could not make it happen. We cannot be whatever we want to be nor will we ever be out from under God’s authority. Kids need to hear these truths often from those who love them because they live in a world that tells them to be their own authority and chase their dreams.

If we are going to call people out of a lifestyle of body idolatry and seeking pleasure outside of God’s good and perfect gifts we need to provide a place for them to go. In her book, Rosaria Butterfield describes a journey of leaving everything she knew when God saved her. She talks about how “gay pride” had permeated every aspect of her life. By God’s grace she had a church home, and she was loved and cared for in that community. There were hard times in that process, and she asks if we realize what we are asking people to do. This is true of any enslaving sin; we cannot merely tell others that it is wrong and to repent, but we need to offer a community of love and help in the process. You and I need to be ready to enter and remain in the trench with others.

Conclusion

At the end of his book, *Understanding Gender Dysphoria*, Mark Yarhouse writes, “*I would not want a pastor to reach the conclusion that reading this book now qualifies them to treat someone who is gender dysphoric*”. He goes on to advocate for referring those who are gender dysphoric to experts in order to receive help. Yarhouse is correct. Reading his book does not qualify someone to treat one who is gender dysphoric. But he is incorrect to say there is a need to refer to an expert because we have a Helper and the perfect book necessary for offering truth and love to one who is gender confused, the Bible. Paul, moved by the Holy Spirit, declared, “*I myself am convinced, my brothers and sisters, that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with knowledge and competent to instruct one another*” (Romans 15:14).

This is not to say there is never a place for biblical counselors to partner with medical doctors in some cases, but God has equipped believers with His Word and His Spirit to speak truth to issues of transgenderism. If the person you are discipling or counseling is already under the care of a physician for this issue, don’t convince them to stop; but counsel them in biblical truth regarding the choices they are making and their beliefs about those choices. Our beliefs flow from our heart therefore, there is great hope for those who are confused. The answer is available in Christ. This resource is intended to help further equip you to love and speak truth to those who are confused. Pray that God will use you in this way and don’t shrink back when the opportunity arises. It is God who works in you to will and to act according to His good purposes.

Transgender ideology is simply sin. I don’t say that to belittle the sacrificial death of Jesus but to enhance the fact that the answer is available in Him. All the world has to offer is further confusion and hardship. We have the privilege of appearing as lights in the world as we hold fast the word of life.

Gender identity confusion is a topic we do not need to avoid and we should not avoid the topic. The world is ready and willing to offer “counsel” on this issue. People looking for answers can readily find lies. My heart breaks for those who are being told lies and embracing them. Believers are called to be witnesses, and this is done by lovingly communicating God’s truth, standing firm in biblical truths, and trusting God with the hearts of others.

Recommended Resources:

DeYoung, Kevin *What Does the Bible Really Teach about Homosexuality?* Wheaton, IL Crossway Publishing, 2015

Mohler, R. Albert. *We Cannot Be Silent: Speaking Truth to a Culture Redefining Sex, Marriage, & the Very Meaning of Right & Wrong.* Nashville, TN Nelson Books, 2015

Burk, Denny & Lambert, Heath *Transforming Homosexuality* Phillipsburg, NJ P&R Publishing, 2015

Butterfield, Rosaria Champagne *The Secret Thoughts of an Unlikely Convert.* Pittsburgh, PA: Crown and Covenant Publishing, 2012

Butterfield, Rosaria Champagne *Openness Unhindered.* Pittsburgh, PA Crown and Covenant Publishing, 2015

Walker, Andrew T. *God and the Transgender Debate: What Does the Bible Actually Say About Gender Identity?* Denmark, The Good Book Company, 2017

The Briefing- <http://www.albertmohler.com/>

<https://www.acpeds.org/the-college-speaks/position-statements/gender-ideology-harms-children>

Homework suggestions for gender identity confusion

Study the attributes of God:

God is sovereign. Acts 4:24-31, 1 Tim. 6:13-16, Eph. 1, Prov. 16:9, Prov. 21:1, Ps. 115:3, Dan. 4:35

God is Omniscient. Ps. 139:1-4, Heb. 4:12-13, 1 Jn. 3:16-20

God is good. Since God is good our calling something good is declaring it to be like God in some way. Ps. 136:1, Ps 107:1

God is Creator. Gen 1-2, Gen 14:19, Isa. 40:28, Col 1:15-17

God is eternal and unchanging. Isa. 46:9-10, Heb. 13:8

God is not a God of disorder but of peace. 1 Cor. 14:33, Rom. 15:33, Phil 4:9

Booklets:

You Can Trust God by Jerry Bridges

Christ and Your Problems by Jay E. Adams

Self-Image How to Overcome Inferiority Judgments by Lou Priolo

Godliness through Discipline by Jay E. Adams

God's Attributes Rest for Life's Struggles by Brad Hambrick

Questions to Ask:

What do you love about your body? Hate about your body? Describe your perfect body.

What would a different body do for you?

What do you think you need to be happy?

What defines success or failure for you?

When have you struggled with jealousy or bitterness?

In what situations do you get sad or depressed?

What rights do you think you should have that you don't currently have?

Where do you believe that God has let you down?

Who are you? Why are you here (on earth)? What is your purpose?

Biblical Topics:

Give a "crossover" assignment. Have your friend or counselee meditate on Ephesians chapters 1-3. Ask them to make a list of the "former" and "now" truths of a believer.

Verses from Biblical View of Mankind section III. E.

Verses from Biblical View of the Body section III. H.

A BIBLE STUDY ON THE USE OF YOUR BODY

Adapted from HOWARD A. EYRICH

1. According to I Corinthians 3:16; 6:19-20, your body belongs to whom? _____

2. What reason does Paul give for this ownership in I Corinthians 6:20?

3. What is the overriding responsibility of the believer to do with his body? (I Corinthians 6:20?) _____

4. In Romans 12:1 Paul indicates the first step in fulfilling this responsibility

is to _____

5. The believer's body is a _____ for God. (I Cor. 6:19).

6. Our bodies are our _____ for existing in time and space (II Cor. 5:1).

8. Paul also indicates in Romans 6:11-13 that this one-time act (death to sin) is evident when we do not _____ and do

not _____

But _____

And _____

List three ways that you have been making your body available to sin.

Then, list three activities of righteousness that you can put in place of these.

Devise a practical plan to accomplish this goal (Rom. 6:19).

10. Some day we will have a body like _____ (I John 3:2).

11. What tangible promise do we have that our bodies will also be redeemed? (Eph. 4:30).

12. There is another evidence of the promise in I Corinthians 15:35-57.

It is the _____ of Jesus Christ. (see v. 57)

13. Read Exodus 3:1-10; 4:1-13. From these verses we learn the principle that God wants to use our bodies to _____ Him.