

Gender Issues in Biblical Counseling: Starting the Conversation

EIBCC

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I. Bringing Clarity to a Culture of Confusion

a. Definitions

- i. Gender: the (psychological) state of being male or female
- ii. *Gender Dysphoria: a general descriptive term which refers to an individual's affective/cognitive discontent with the assigned gender, but is more specifically defined when used as a diagnostic category
- iii. Transgenderism: a broad spectrum of individuals who persistently identify with a gender different from their biological sex
- iv. Cisgender: when a person's gender conforms to their biological sex
- v. Intersex: a person who is born with ambiguous genitalia and a chromosomal anomaly

*our focus today

II. In a Perfect World (Creation)

a. Purpose of Male and Female

- i. More than chromosomes
- ii. Unique creations to reflect God in unique ways

b. Purpose of Marriage

III. Things Ain't the Way They Should Be (The Fall)

a. The Kingdom of Self and Gender Dysphoria

- i. Rebellion

- ii. Gender as identity
- iii. Broken frameworks of manhood and womanhood
- iv. Gender is to serve self, for personal satisfaction
- v. Community is those who support them and approve
- vi. What feels right IS right
- vii. Distressed: Sinners and Sufferers
- viii. Hope is place in being “my own truest, authentic self”

IV. Turn your Eyes upon Jesus, Look Full in His Wonderful Face (Redemption)

a. Identity Crisis

Colossians 3: 1-4, 17

¹Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.²Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. ³For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. ⁴When Christ, who is your^(a)life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

17 And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

**Emphasis added*

b. How do we help?

- i. The goal is not and must not be to make the counselee feel like a man or woman. This is not the counselor’s job, but God’s.
- ii. Goal: encourage towards holiness in all aspects of life
 - 1. True joy in Christ, versus misplaced hope in aligning body with perceived gender
- iii. Acknowledge their struggle: though sinful thoughts and actions may have led them here, they did not choose to be distressed in this way

- iv. Listen to and help them understand their own story
 - 1. How did they get here?
 - a. What do they value most?
 - b. What is their worldview?
 - c. History. Listen for:
 - i. Past Suffering
 - ii. Broken frameworks of manhood/womanhood
 - iii. Exposure to inappropriate sexual contexts at a young or key developmental age (ex: puberty)
 - iv. These can help create a roadmap for where and why this originated
- v. Help them understand their sin in context
 - 1. The Fall: Romans 3:23: “All” means “all.”
- vi. Emphasize Identity in Christ
 - 1. Who are you? HIS.
 - 2. Rebuild broken ideas about what it means to be a man or woman
 - a. Replace with biblical manhood and womanhood, and teach how to live out of this
 - b. Gender has a bigger purpose than our personal happiness
- vii. Contentment
 - 1. Philippians 4:11-13
- viii. Help them suffer well
 - 1. Romans 8:18-25
- ix. Bring in others to remind them of truth: Community

1. Compassion is key
2. Encourage authenticity

x. Cultivate a healthy longing for heaven

1. The counselee may not have peace in this lifetime. But they will in the next.
2. Isaiah 56:17, Revelation 21:5

V. **Continuing the Discussion:** What has your experience been with counseling those who are transgender or gender dysphoric? How else can we help point them to Christ?