

## **Sex and Gender in a Fluid Culture: How Christians Lovingly and Courageously Respond with Grace and Truth**

**Gen. 1:27, Romans 1:18-27; 1 Cor. 6:18-20 and Various Passages**

**Intro.** In the movie “Boy Erased” Jared (Lucas Hedges) comes out as gay to his Baptist pastor father (Russell Crowe). The father tries conversion-therapy and other means until finally, Jared says, “There’s no changing me. You are going to have to be the one who changes.” The father’s conviction and belief on sexuality from a biblical viewpoint is the ONLY thing that can change. It’s a black and white issue for those in the LGBTQ community. And some of you may be in one of these two positions this morning.

**Brett McCracken**, in an article reviewing the movie, writes, “The film reflects our progressive secular culture’s oddly rigid view of sexuality as something fixed and immutable—even as this same culture insists on total gender fluidity. So, one’s gender can be changed, but not one’s sexual desires? In the end, the LGBTQ movement’s conception of “change” is both internally inconsistent and also experientially depressing. Imagine being told that your unwanted desires to drink or gamble or envy are “just who you are” and that changing your desires is impossible. To suggest an unchangeable givenness to the matrix of desires that constitutes a supposedly fixed “identity” is a truly novel and unbiblical anthropology. It is a notion fundamentally at odds with a faith defined by resurrection and renewal, where to be in Christ is to be a “new creation.” --- **Today, I want us to explore the current sexual struggles of our culture and how Christians must view it if they are true to God’s word and also how they can live redemptively in this culture.**

**Around 2010**, I was teaching an evangelism course at the church I pastored near Raleigh, NC. A few of us decided to attend the Pagan Pride Festival (witches, warlocks, New Age mystics, Nature worshipers, etc.). While standing at booth with some men, in what looked like Boy Scout uniforms, I had my first exposure to the LGBTQ’s social agenda Gay Boy Scouts of America. They had rainbow stitched flags on their uniforms. I asked him what was his goal. He said, “To get gays in the Boy Scouts as members and leaders.” They succeeded: 2013 (Scouts); 2015 (Leaders) and 2017 Transgender.

- Our Current situation can be traced to Anthony Kennedy’s decision on the Supreme Court to strike down the **Defense of Marriage Act in 2013**.
- Led to the **Obergefell Ruling in 2015** that States must allow and recognize same-sex marriages.
- LGB – T with an aggressive agenda to normalize transgenderism and bring to the mainstream a redefinition of sexuality apart from the body (Gender-Identity). **Pres. Biden** made transgenderism a human right, and said that “*Transgender Discrimination is the Civil Rights Issue of our Time.*”
- In 2016, the Obama Administration imposed transgender mandates with the **Affordable Care Act and Title 9** (where they changed the word Sex from male and female to gender identity). Through the health care system, government mandated insurance companies to cover sex-modifications the same as they would for a cancer patient.
- Media has also been used to soften opinions nationally and internationally. In the 1990s, **Ellen DeGeneres** came out publicly as lesbian; Shows like **Will and Grace, Modern Family, Teen Wolf and Glee** (targeted at teenagers). Social media platforms such as Instagram, Snap Chat and Tik Tok have made a huge effort to include all forms of sexual variances. While only 7.2% identify in the LGBTQ community in the US, you would think it to be much higher given media coverage.

Borrowing from the Gnostics, who believed that only the soul/spirit was pure and the body inferior; therefore, it could be used for anything, and then coming out of the Enlightenment era of abandoning God, men like...

- **Sigmund Freud** – goal of human existence was happiness, achieved by pursuing whatever form of sexual expression they desired. Freud sought to put Sex at the center of human existence.
- **Alfred Kinsey – 1948 wrote *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male (Female)*; “Born this way”; “I have always been this way”**; Set out to prove that babies and children were sexual beings and could be born homosexual. He did research on babies as early as 4 months old. Kinsey used some 3,000 children for his research; that now, we know was fraudulent research. People are asking, “Why are we trying to push this into our elementary schools and preschools?” The Progressive movement in America believes that it is REPRESSIVE to deny children their human right to express their sexuality as early as possible. There is a monument to Kinsey at Indiana University.

- **Dr. John Money** – a contemporary...John Hopkins physician, Sex Researcher – convinced the parents of Bruce Remer (born in 1965) to undergo a sex change after a botched circumcision. Money believed that Gender was social construct (an idea that society accepts as true; which is being demanded in the Transgender community, especially in Sports), and sought to distinguish and later disconnect a person’s social roles from the biological fact of being male or female.” He believed that you if you could get to a child young enough, you could change them to live the opposite sex. BTW, when Bruce Remer found out what had happened to him, he started living as a man because he knew he was a man. But the trauma that it caused in his mind, he couldn’t get over and he took his life.

The ramifications of these men on society have been earth shattering. As a result, cultural, social and sexual progressives have made gender segregated from physical reality and now we are being, in some instances, forced to use subjective terms (or alternate pronouns) for objective reality.

Christians are struggling with this topic because they are pitted on one side or the other, but as we will see, Jesus gives us the right perspective. As Alistair Begg said, “Homosexual people say, “Either you hate me or you affirm me.” Christians actually do neither. We do not hate, nor do we affirm. We cannot hate because of God’s Word. We cannot affirm because of God’s Word. And we have to be prepared to say that we are unprepared to rewrite the bible in order to accommodate a society that needs the bible and that needs the Jesus who is the focus of the bible.”

We must approach this topic from two angles:

## 1. In a Fluid Culture, What Truths are Unchangeable?

### The First Unchangeable Truth is...

- A. **God has Created Every Person in His Image (Gen. 1:27 “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.”** To be made in the image and likeness of God is to be filled with the glory of God and radiate the glory of God from your whole being. It’s to be emotional, relational and reasoning with the eternity of a soul that hungers for their Creator. It is to be the unique expression of God and God’s nature in the world, distinct from all other created things.
  - **God Created them Male and Female** (male = zākār and female = nēqebah ... binary nature of human sexuality that are opposite but corresponding – “made for each other”)
  - **Gen. 2:18-24**

Here we have God’s design for sexual union and the beauty of relational oneness. It is such a beautiful picture of the binary nature of human sexuality, that **George Guthrie, professor at Union University**, points out that “in no other creation story in Ancient Near Eastern literature is woman so exalted, sharing in God’s image.” The beauty of sexual union between a man and woman is as Guthrie says, “the means by which God brings another image-bearer into the universe.” He goes on by saying, “Beyond dispute is the bald fact that this binary “ordering” underlies who we are as the human family. Every person reading these words, whether gay or straight—indeed, every person on the planet—exists as a biologically binary gift from a male and a female parent.” It also serves as a deterrent to abuses and perversions which were prevalent among the other nations surrounding Israel. But, this is the reality when man rejects being an image-bearer of God.

### The Second Unchangeable Truth...

- B. **Man has Rejected God with Devastating Consequences** (Genesis 3:1 tells the story, “Did God truly say?”) With the fall of man, God’s original design was traded for self-determination, but outside of God’s design people’s base appetites take over, and the result is devastation.
  - **Disfigurement of the Image of God in the First Five Books** – sexual perversion of incest, adultery, bestiality and homosexuality (**Lev. 18:22-24** “You shall not lie with a male as one lies with a female; it is an abomination. Also, you shall not have intercourse with any animal to be defiled with it, nor shall any woman stand before an animal to mate with it; it is a perversion. ‘Do not defile

yourselves by any of these things; for by all these the nations which I am casting out before you have become defiled.”)

- **Then with Asherah Poles of Cannanite Baal Worship – 1 Kings 15** “put away the male prostitutes and remove all the idols...and the Asherah pole which was a horrid image.”

Surrounding Israel were the pagan nations that worshipped Baal and Molech, the gods of fire and fertility, with their female counterparts, Asherah and Ashteroth. People believed that to appease the gods, they had to express their sexuality in various sexual acts with multiple partners, homo-erotic sex, sex with children and sex with animals. God commanded his people to show the nations a better way, since sin had devalued and defaced the beauty of sex that he had given as a gift to humanity.

These practices are where we are headed once again.

- **Further Disfigurement of the Image of God in Romans 1:24-32 (Read)** Every sin, not just the sins of sexual perversion, disfigures the image of God.

**Ernest Becker** writes: “Without a definite belief in God and the conviction that we are made in the image of God, then we feel that we have the freedom and the duty to be who we want or feel like being. We look to others and to pop culture to justify our feelings and desires. And with the secularization of our culture, we have increased permission to believe anything that we want to believe with justification without accountability, without believing that we were made in the image of God and created by God; we then have to cling to something or someone else because we were made for God. Once you reject God’s design, then that desire within you, for relationship, has to be directed towards something or someone else, and in our culture, it is directed toward the people that we love. Therefore, our love for someone else becomes the god that we were made to worship. This is why we are the first culture in human history to romanticize over one person and put all of our affection into believing that a person is our soulmate. We have come to idolize romance, and the people we want to be in love with, and replaced all of our affection that we would give to God and placed that into another person. And when that person doesn’t match up to what we desire or what we think they should, it’s devastating to us.” – There is some really Good News!

### The Third Unchangeable Truth is...

- B. **Jesus Christ Restores All Those Who Trust in Him through His Work of Redemption on the Cross** (Jesus redeemed and used a church that struggled 1 Cor. 6:9-10; Eph. 2:8-9)

## The Becket Cook Story (final page)

### 2. In the Context of Unchangeable Truth, How Do I Live by Grace and Truth?

- A. **Look** (Look at people as image-bearers and then look for ways to love them)
- B. **Listen** (Listen to their stories, their struggles, their pain and their opinions)
- C. **Learn** (Learn from how the person feels and ways to approach their need)
- D. **Love** (Love people despite your disagreements and find ways to earn their ear when it’s your time to speak). This is our goal. This is our mission. The Gospel changes lives!
- E. **Live** (Live in a way that honors Christ, stands on the truth and sees them as a creation of God)

**Michael Clary** in his book, *God’s Good Design*, “Eventually, everyone will have to choose to either follow Christ or follow the LGBTQ movement. You can’t have it both ways.” **No one can dispute the fact that the bible says NOTHING positive about homo-erotic or any type of sexual perversion. Therefore, we have to make our choice.** We either stand with God

and His Word or we reject His word. We cannot have it both ways! We can sympathize, love and pray but we cannot affirm. – So, as we stand firm: Look, Listen, Learn, Love and Liv the Gospel of Jesus Christ! Where do we begin today? On the altar, face down in prayer!

We need and we must pray for ourselves to live for Christ authentically, truthfully, lovingly and intentionally! If we're not willing to pray, nothing is going to change! Let's pray for revival in us and a spiritual awakening in our nation!! Let's pray for families struggling with these issues and let's pray for our parents to stand strong!

## Becket Cook's Story

In 2020, Becket Cook, the author of *A Change of Affection: A Gay Man's Incredible Story of Redemption*, wrote an article for *The Gospel Coalition*, about how he was blacklisted in Hollywood after he came to faith in Jesus Christ:

“With a highly successful career as a production designer in the fashion world, I lived as a fully engaged gay man in Hollywood. I had many boyfriends over the years; attended Pride Parades in Los Angeles, San Francisco, and New York; and marched in innumerable rallies for gay-marriage equality. My identity as a gay man was immutable, or so I thought.

But in 2009 I experienced something extraordinary: I had a radical encounter with Jesus Christ while attending an evangelical church in Hollywood for the first time (I was invited by a stranger I met at a coffee shop the week before). I walked into the church a gay atheist and walked out two hours later a born-again Christian, in love with Jesus. I was stunned by this reversal. Since then, I no longer identify as gay but rather choose to be celibate because I believe God's plan and purpose—revealed in the Bible—is authoritative, true, and good.

Surrendering my sexuality hasn't been easy. I still struggle with vestiges of same-sex attraction, but denying myself, taking up my cross, and following Jesus is an honor. Any struggles I experience pale in comparison to the joy of a personal relationship with the one who created me and gives my life meaning. My identity is no longer in my sexuality; it's in Jesus.

When I came out as a Christian to my friends in L.A. and New York, I was met with skepticism and, in some cases, outright hostility. But it wasn't until my memoir was published in 2019 that all hell broke loose. My closest, lifelong friends completely abandoned me, and my production-design agency in Hollywood dropped me like a hot potato under the most vague and frivolous of pretexts—even though I was one of their top artists, earning them loads of money over the years. Of course, if my memoir had been a celebration of my gay identity, I would've had advertising and editorial clients beating down my door with even more job offers. I lost both dear friends and my livelihood.

To be clear, I'm not complaining or claiming to be a victim. What I gained in Christ is absolutely priceless. Like the apostle Paul, I'm learning to “count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish” (Phil. 3:8).

Jesus's warning was clear: "If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you" (John 15:18–19).

Yes, the loss of close friendships and a lucrative career were harsh, but being in the kingdom of God more than compensates! I am royalty, an heir of God and fellow heir with Christ. My joy is not "fragile" in that it depends on the affirmation of others. My joy is secure because I am in Christ—and thus favorable in the sight of God, whose approval is ultimately all that matters.