

July 17, 2022

Sour Subjects: Week 2

Question: How many have ever had an experience that just didn't sit right?

We've all had experiences in life...

- That just don't sit well
- Or sometimes we're not sure what to do
- Or CULTURE has become so accepting of certain behaviors, we don't know what kind of response we should give.

Who do YOU think YOU are?

In the crosshairs of Culture today is the push for SELF IDENTITY. YOU identifying who YOU believe you truly are.

Before we look at this issue, and other current cultural issues, please understand there has not only been a massive shift in the world around us, but in the (big) CHURCH as well! Years ago there would have been greater consensus of the CHURCH to call out what was considered UNNATURAL/SINFUL practices to a much greater degree.

But we are living in a society of Tolerance and Acceptance... the declaring that God LOVES ALL PEOPLE and ACCEPTS ALL PEOPLE regardless of their lifestyle practices and/or their orientation.

So let me be clear about how REALIFE addresses the issues that are tinderboxes in today's culture.

- We don't HATE anyone!
- We named the church on purpose, we want to be REAL with people
- We will always hold to Biblical Values over Cultural Opinions
- We will listen, and not rush to judgment.
- We can lovingly disagree

So what's the truth about our IDENTITY?

The headlines are debating Transsexualism, or Transgenderism, Gender Identity, or Gender Dysphoria, [*which is a feeling that your biological/genetic/physiological gender does not match the gender you identify with and/or perceive yourself to be*]... and the right for YOU to label YOU!

Changes in secular culture are also changing our vocabulary. For example, the term "gender" no longer means only *male* or *female*. Instead, gender now takes into account *identity, personality, and expression*.

One of the challenging pieces in this is the seemingly universal push, and the Rapid onset of Gender Dysphoria.

What isn't always articulated is that... Gender Dysphoria consists of 0.3% of society.

This past week, our Governor vetoed a bill to keep Transgender, Biological males from competing in women's sports. He calls it, "*discrimination against an already marginalized youth demographic that comprises less than half of 1 percent of PA's population!*"

Some will point out that the Bible doesn't explicitly mention Transgenderism or Gender Dysphoria or individuals having transgender feelings. However, the Bible has plenty to say about human sexuality.

Most basic to our understanding of GENDER is that God created two (and only two) genders: "male and female He created them" (Genesis 1:27).

All the modern-day speculation about numerous genders or gender fluidity—or even a gender "continuum" with unlimited genders—is foreign to the Bible.

Medical Science even backs this up!

Two Identifier's... XX Chromosomes & XY Chromosomes

- God assigned our sex at conception which verifies our gender and our role in humanity.
- Every cell in our body carries the genetic code of our sex/gender.
- Physical attributes confirm to almost every human who you are.

Gender and Sex are equal sides of the same coin no matter what popular culture or opinion is trying to tell us!

Nature, Nurture or the Plea for Acceptance?

Are there RARE occasions when there is physical gender confusion? Yes! As there are other challenging defects that happen in humanity, but by and large, they are in the rarest of cases.

Opposite View- to defend these rarities, those with opposing views have distorted Biblical teaching by expanding on *possibilities* as foundational.

All people, including LGBTQ individuals, were created in God's image: "So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them." (*Genesis 1:27, NSRV*)

The use of the two primary genders in this passage is likely a "merism", a figure of speech by which a single thing (in this case, humanity) is referred to by a phrase that lists several of its parts, but does not list all components.

In the other creation passages, day and night are specified, but not twilight; seas and land are mentioned, but not creeks or marshes; vegetation on land but no reference to algae. [10]

2. In the beginning God created the Heavens AND the Earth. The AND represents all the things in the middle that we are yet to discover! Alpha AND Omega...

3. All people are justified through Christ, including LGBTQ people. "God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them" (*2 Corinthians 5:19*), therefore, "we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand." (*Romans 5:1, 2*). This is not to say that being LGBTQ is a sin, but if it were, it would certainly be forgiven.

Biblical View-

At the heart of the transgender experience is gender incongruence, an internal sense of gender at odds with one's birth sex.

A Biblical theology of the body, however, argues for the essentiality of the body in determining our identity.

A Biblical theology of the body necessarily involves three central Christian doctrines—

- The Creation of Humanity
- The Incarnation of Jesus, and...
- The Resurrection of Believers.

God's creation of humanity as male and female is, at LEAST, because God intends for humans to reproduce, and at MOST, God's intention for humanity to be female and male may be related to human incompleteness apart from a sexually differentiated other.

As many theologians note, God intended humanity to be in His image as male and female together because it makes humans necessarily relational beings who, not finding completeness apart from each other, also realize their incompleteness apart from God.

5 BIBLICAL TRUTHS ABOUT GENDER

1. Gender was God's idea

Gender is not a cultural construct that individuals are forced into. It is the design of our Creator and yet another aspect of His glory.

Genesis 1:27 (ESV) records, "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them".

2. Masculinity in men and Femininity in women are both celebrated in the Bible.

3. Gender, like many aspects of our lives, is determined and fixed by God. According to *Psalm 139:13-14 (ESV)*, we are “fearfully and wonderfully” made by God as He “knits us together in our mother’s womb”.

Scripture makes no distinction between our biological sex and our gender.

There is an irony happening right before our eyes within those pushing the LGBT agenda. For years the primary argument used to defend homosexuality is that it is fixed from birth. Many argue they were born gay and so that cannot deny who they are. Now, however, this same community is arguing that gender is not fixed but rather quite fluid and can be chosen. So which is it? It seems contradictory to argue both exist.

4. While the Bible assigns different roles and responsibilities to each gender it condemns gender inequality or discrimination.

Admittedly, in the name of Christ, many injustices sinfully exist. The actions of misguided or false Christians to oppress based on gender, however, do not change what God has made clear in His Word.

Paul knew that men and women were equal to God in value which is why he wrote: “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus” *Galatians 3:28 (ESV)*

He also recognized our mutual dependence on one another when he teaches, “Nevertheless, in the Lord woman is not independent of man nor man of woman” *1 Corinthians 11:11 (ESV)*

5. Confusion is real and it is a result of the curse of sin.

God is not the author of confusion, but Satan’s primary strategy is to deceive. People can and do experience deep seated confusion about all kinds of issues in life and this, of course, can include gender identity.

Hating or hurting people who are struggling with confusion is a direct violation of the gospel.

Equally damaging is affirming their efforts to find clarity by abandoning what God so clearly gave them, their biological gender.

As humans, we do not need new bodies... we need new hearts. God gives those out all the time.